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PILOTS & AGUIRRE DEMAND LOWERING OF SUNROAD TOWER

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A local pilot is speaking out Tuesday over the controversial Sunroad building near Montgomery Field. The FAA considers the 12-story Sunroad building a hazard, reconfirming the claims of some leaders in City Hall.

Pilots say they watched in disbelief as the building continued to grow less than a mile from Montgomery Field -- 180 feet in all, and 20 feet above the legal limit.

Pilot Rick Beach is also president of the Community Airfields Association of San Diego, and today he joined City Attorney Michael Aguirre in asking Mayor Jerry Sanders to immediately stop all construction on the Sunroad building.

"The FAA and State Department of Transportation of Aeronautics work very hard to make it easier for me to fly at night and to fly in bad weather and get home safely, and the construction of an obstacle that violates those safety regulations adds risk to those safety procedures," Beach said.

Aguirre is asking the mayor to halt construction until Sunroad submits plans that show they're serious about taking down the top 20 feet.

"This is a way to break the logjam and start us down a different path all together," Aguirre said.

Montgomery Field is one of the busiest municipal airports in Southern California. Last year, the FAA declared the Sunroad building a hazard to airplanes landing in bad weather.

Aguirre says Sunroad clearly knew the FAA's feelings, and chose to ignore them, putting the City of San Diego at risk.

"If a wheel of a plane clips the top of that building, the liability and moral responsibility for the City of San Diego for not obeying the law would be catastrophic," he said.

There is already a stop work order in place for the top 20 feet. This new order, if signed by the mayor, would halt construction on all 12 floors both inside and outside the building.

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