



*Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515*

*Anna G. Eshoo
Eighteenth District
California*

September 3, 2015

The Honorable Michael P. Huerta, Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 1022
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

I write to follow up on the July 24, 2015 meeting with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) staff, local elected officials, and representatives of community organizations from Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties regarding commercial aircraft noise impacts on our local communities.

As I have noted in my previous letters to you and during our meeting in Washington, D.C. on May 20, 2015, the FAA's implementation of new flight paths in the Northern California Metroplex including those pursuant to the NextGen program has caused unacceptable increases in noise impacts on my constituents across my Congressional District. This is evidenced by the substantial increase in noise complaints received by both my office and the SFO Noise Abatement Office, as well as data analysis of local organizations demonstrating concentration and lowering of flight paths. Local governments in our area have also recognized this as a major problem. The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and the City Council of Palo Alto both unanimously adopted resolutions calling on the FAA to mitigate aircraft noise affecting our communities. Both resolutions are enclosed for your review and demonstrate the significance of a regional problem which the FAA must address.

The City of Palo Alto has also requested bids for a Technical Study to analyze the increase in aircraft noise over Palo Alto and identify alternatives that would reduce noise impacts or more equitably distribute noise. Specifically, this study will examine the feasibility of altering routes or operating procedures to: eliminate low-altitude flights over Palo Alto and neighboring communities; have fewer flights below 8,000 feet overland; and eliminate nighttime flights over residences. I hope you and your staff will closely consider this study as it proceeds.

In Portola Valley, 1250 citizens have signed a petition sent to the Town Council seeking relief from the aircraft noise. Since then, the Portola Valley Town Council has committed funds to hire an aviation consultant to pursue their own technical study.

I recently conducted my own informal survey of aircraft noise impacts across my District. Of the nearly 3,000 responses I received from my constituents in three counties, over 82 percent of individuals reported a recent increase in aircraft noise since the NextGen implementation began. More than half of the survey respondents reported being disturbed by aircraft noise at night or early in the morning.

There is consensus among those in attendance at the July 24 meeting with FAA Regional Director Glen Martin and other FAA staff was very productive, and on behalf of my constituents I'm grateful to Director Martin for participating and to you for your willingness to hold this meeting and others in the near future. Following this meeting, it's essential for the FAA to consider the concerns expressed, including the impact of noise on public health and the environment. It is also important that the FAA follow through on several short-term mitigation measures discussed in our meeting, including examining raising the altitudes of incoming flights to San Francisco International Airport and Norman Y. Mineta San José International Airport, and examining alternative airspace and operational procedures to mitigate the especially disruptive impacts of nighttime flights. Over the long term, FAA staff committed to examining a metroplex redesign, including routing more flights over the Bay to minimize noise impacts on the ground while not shifting noise to neighboring communities. The FAA also agreed to identify a timeline for implementation of short-term and long-term measures.

I appreciate you and your staff's willingness to improve and continue the dialogue between the FAA and the affected communities in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. I encourage your staff to open a direct line of communication with the leadership of 'Sky Posse' and 'Calm the Skies,' two community-based organizations formed by residents of the affected neighborhoods in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. I also renew my April request that the FAA hold a public meeting in Santa Clara County as well as San Mateo County so we can announce it within the next 30 days and hold it within 60 days on the implementation of NextGen in the Northern California Metroplex and its related noise impacts and discuss issues that date back prior to NextGen.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and I look forward to your timely response.

Most gratefully,



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Enclosures

RESOLUTION NO. BDS-2015-124

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA REQUESTING THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION ADDRESS INCREASED AIRCRAFT NOISE IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is implementing a planned transition to the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) to standardize arrival and departure routes through the use of GPS-based technologies in 21 identified metroplexes, which is a region with multiple airports serving major metropolitan areas where heavy airport activity and environmental constraints combine to hinder the efficient movement of air traffic; and

WHEREAS, the Northern California Metroplex is comprised of four commercial airports, San Francisco International Airport (SFO), Oakland International Airport (OAK), Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC) and Sacramento International Airport (SMF); and

WHEREAS, as part of the transition to NextGen, the FAA recently changed the flight paths followed by commercial aircraft flying into and out of SFO, OAK, and SJC, as well as other airports in the Northern California Metroplex under a project the FAA calls the Northern California Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (NorCal OAPM); and

WHEREAS, according to the FAA, the NorCal OAPM consists of new procedures and technologies to establish more direct flight routes intended to significantly improve safety, efficiency, and reduce fuel burn and carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, on July 31, 2014, the FAA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact that NorCal OAPM would not have any significant noise impact on communities and surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS, the new flight paths into SFO, entitled SERFER One, Oceanic, and Pt. Reyes, the new flight path into San Jose, entitled BRXXX, and the new flight paths out of SFO and Oakland, entitled WESLA, CNDL, and SSTIK, are primarily impacting Santa Clara County residents of the Town of Los Gatos, including the Summit/Skyline area, and the City of Palo Alto, but also residents of the cities of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, and Saratoga, due to the considerable increase in the number of flights overhead each day and lower flight altitudes, resulting in a significant increase in the amount of aircraft noise experienced on the ground; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by the number of complaints received by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, as well as the complaints received by the SFO Noise Abatement Office, the new routes have created noise impacts that appear to be far more adverse than those of the former routes for our residents; and

WHEREAS, in January and February 2015, SFO received an average of 17.5 complaint calls from Palo Alto residents and zero complaint calls from Los Gatos and Summit/Skyline area residents but by June 2015 the number of complaints and complaint calls had increased to 150

Palo Alto callers with a total of 2,733 complaints and 89 Los Gatos and Summit/Skyline area callers with a total of 3,553 complaints;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara requests the FAA immediately mitigate the increased aircraft noise at ground level in Santa Clara County caused by the NorCal OAPM project by identifying all short- and long-term solutions and the expected timetable for their implementation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara requests the FAA, as part of the above analysis of aircraft noise mitigation measures, to consider the immediate solution of raising altitudes on the new flight paths and, as part of the longer-term solutions, consider a redesign of the flight paths within the Northern California Metroplex provided, however, that such efforts shall not include "noise shifting," i.e. simply moving the noise from one community to another;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara requests that the Congress of the United States implement statutory changes to the FAA that require more robust community engagement before flight paths are changed, more accurate measures of noise experienced on the ground, and independent research on the health impacts of aviation noise;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara requests that the FAA continue to meet with community representatives and impacted residents from Santa Clara County to further discuss and address these matters;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be distributed to the offices of the members of the Bay Area Congressional Delegation and the offices of United States Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

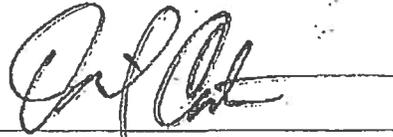
PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara, State of California, on August 25, 2015, by the following vote:

AYES: **CHAVEZ, CORTESE, SIMITIAN, WASSERMAN, YEAGER**

NOES: **NONE**

ABSENT: **NONE**

ABSTAIN: **NONE**



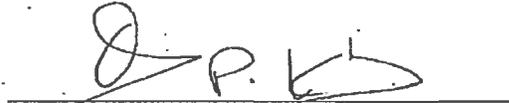
DAVE CORTESE, President
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:



MEGAN DOYLE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:



ORRY P. KORB
County Counsel

RESOLUTION NO. 9543
Resolution of the City Council of the City of Palo Alto
Urging the Federal Aviation Administration to
Address Increased Aircraft Noise in Palo Alto, CA

1. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is implementing a transition to the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) to standardize arrival and departure routes through the use of GPS-based technologies in 21 identified metroplexes, which are regions with multiple airports serving major metropolitan areas.
2. The Northern California Metroplex includes four commercial airports, San Francisco International Airport (SFO), Oakland International Airport (OAK), Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC) and Sacramento International Airport (SMF).
3. As part of the transition to NextGen, the FAA recently changed the flight paths followed by commercial aircraft flying into and out of SFO, OAK, and SJC, as well as other airports in the Northern California Metroplex under a project the FAA calls the Northern California Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (NorCal OAPM).
4. According to the FAA, the NorCal OAPM consists of new procedures and technologies to establish more direct flight routes intended to significantly improve safety, efficiency, and reduce fuel burn and carbon emissions.
5. On July 31, 2014, the FAA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact that NorCal OAPM would not have any significant noise impact on communities and surrounding areas based on inadequate sound metrics which do not reflect disturbance on the ground.
6. The noise generated by flights in the Northern California Metroplex is primarily impacting Santa Clara County residents of Los Gatos, Palo Alto and the Summit/Skyline area, and to a lesser degree the residents of Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, and Saratoga. The considerable increase in the number of flights overhead each day and the lower flight altitudes result in a significant increase in the amount of aircraft noise experienced on the ground.

7. As evidenced by the increasing number of complaints received by the City of Palo Alto City Council and staff, the new routes have created noise impacts that appear to be far more adverse than those of the former routes for our residents.

8. The number of noise complaints submitted to the SFO Noise Abatement Office from Palo Alto residents has increased significantly in the last year, as shown in this table:

	May 2014	May 2015	June 2014	June 2015
Complaints	45	1397	60	2733
Complainants	3	318	11	150

The number of complaints from Los Gatos and Summit/Skyline increased from zero in January/February 2015 to 3553 complaints, from 89 callers, in June 2015.

NOW, THEREFORE the Council of the City of Palo Alto does resolve as follows:

SECTION 1:

A. The City Council requests the FAA immediately mitigate the increased aircraft noise at ground level in Palo Alto caused by the NorCal OAPM project by identifying all short- and long-term solutions and the expected timetable for their implementation.

B. The City Council of the City of Palo Alto requests the FAA, as part of the above analysis of aircraft noise mitigation measures, raise immediately the altitude of all flight paths over our city, reduce the number of night time flights into SFO, and, as part of the longer-term solutions, redesign the flight paths within the Northern California Metroplex so that the noise burden is borne equitably by all communities that benefit from air travel, and reconfigure the final approach paths so that descent over the bay is maximized.

C. The City requests that the FAA urge Congress to amend the FAA Modernization and Reform Act to eliminate the availability of a categorical exclusion and bar the presumption of no significant affect on the quality of the human environment that currently apply to navigation performance and area navigation procedures.

D. The City Council of the City of Palo Alto requests that the Congress of the United States implement statutory changes to the FAA that require more robust

community engagement before flight paths are changed, more accurate measures of noise experienced on the ground, and independent research on the impacts of aviation noise on health and learning.

E. The City Council of the City of Palo Alto requests that the FAA continue to meet with community representatives and impacted residents from Palo Alto to discuss further and address these matters.

SECTION 2: The Council finds that the adoption of this resolution does not meet the definition of a project under Section 21065 of the California Environmental Quality Act and, therefore, no environmental review is necessary.

INTRODUCED AND PASSED: August 24, 2015

AYES: BERMAN, BURT, DUBOIS, FILSETH, HOLMAN, KNISS, SCHARFF, SCHMID,
WOLBACH

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

DocuSigned by:
Molly Stump
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City Attorney

DocuSigned by:

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CITY MANAGER