

Washington .I.S.E. Watch

A Publication of National Organization to Insure a Sound Controlled Environment (NOISE). NOISE, an affiliate of the National League of Cities has served for over 37 years as America's only nation-wide, community based association composed of local elected officials representing thousands of citizens across the United States committed to reducing the impact of aviation noise on local communities. (www.aviation-noise.org email: contact@aviation-noise.org) Volume 43, Issue 4 Winter 2007

Mark Your Calendars!

The annual National Organization to Insure a Sound-Controlled Environment (NOISE) **Legislative Forum** is being held Monday, March 10th in Washington, D.C. at the National League of Cities Annual Congressional City Conference. The Congressional City Conference is being held at the Hilton Washington Hotel and Towers. The legislative forum is a great opportunity to learn more about important aviation noise issues affecting your community. Also, this just announced, the **38th Annual NOISE Summer Conference and Aviation Noise Symposium** will be held on July 16th-18th at the Embassy Suites Dulles North, near Washington, D.C. The conference will host a wide variety of experts on aviation noise from across the nation and will help bring together communities leaders who are dealing with this issue. Visit aviation-noise.org for future NOISE events and updates.

New SE Regional Director Elected

NOISE elected Clyde K. Mitchell, Council Member from East Point, GA, as its South East Regional Director this year. The City of East Point and Council Member Mitchell have a long history of participation in **NOISE** organization and in local efforts to address aviation noise issues in the Atlanta metropolitan area. In his new role as Regional Director, Council Member Mitchell will assist local officials from across the country in advocating for responsible solutions to the adverse effects of aviation noise on America's communities.

FAA Updates

On November 6th, the House passed S. 2265 an extension of the Federal Aviation Administration's through the end of the calendar year, allowing the administration to continue to collect fees and excise taxes until the final reauthorization bill is completed. The FAA is currently operating under a short-term authorization as part of the fiscal 2008 continuing resolution (P.L. 108-176) that lasts through November 16th. The Senate passed the underlying legislation on October 30th, but its version did not include the extension of the FAA's other programs. Serious differences between the current versions of the House and Senate bills could make reconciling them difficult, and no date for conference committee has been set.

The House earlier passed the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007* (H.R. 2881) on September 20th by a vote of 267 to 151. The bill reauthorizes the FAA at \$68 billion over four years. The Senate has yet to consider its version of the bill (S. 1300).

On September 19th, the White House released a statement threatening to veto the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007* (H.R. 2881), unless major changes were made in the fees and taxes used to pay for air traffic control system upgrades. The Administration stated that the bill "falls far short of providing critical reforms proposed by the administration. Indeed, it would make the status quo worse by undoing progress achieved in prior Congresses." The bill was amended to include a measure to pay for the upgrades with an increased per gallon fuel tax of 24.1 cents (up from the previous 19.3 cents), the

Administration has proposed a per-flight fee based on distance traveled in an effort to more directly tie the costs of the system to its various users.

The Administration's proposal is backed by the airline industry who charges that general aviation doesn't carry its share of the air traffic control costs. General aviation interests favor the current system and claim that the administration's proposal would simply be a form of corporate welfare.

The Administration has also expressed concern over the bill's mandated negotiation and possible arbitration between the FAA and the air traffic controllers union.

MAC Settlement

On October 15th the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), in Minnesota voted unanimously to approve an agreement that will bring meaningful relief to area residents in Minnesota who suffer from the negative impacts of excessive aviation noise. The agreement, which is a victory for all parties involved was approved by NOISE member cities, Minneapolis, Richfield and Eagan. The lawsuit was brought against MAC due to their failure to fulfill their promise to provide sound insulation to homes in the 60-65 dB DNL contour. The \$130 million settlement sends a signal to airports that they must follow through with their noise mitigation commitments.

NOISE members have applauded the members of MAC for reaching this agreement that will finally address the negative effects of aviation noise associated with the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport and recognizing the impact excessive aviation noise has on our communities.

NOISE Congressional Hearing

On October 24th, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation held a hearing on aviation noise with a panel that included Carl Burlison, FAA director of the office of environment and energy; Gerald Dillingham, U.S. Government Accountability Office director of physical infrastructure issues; Rep. Joseph Crowley (NY-7), and Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-4). Dennis McGrann, NOISE Executive Director, also testified in hearing, discussing in depth the importance of communication, research and development, and ongoing noise mitigation. He gave numerous examples of successful communication and coordination between airports and communities, specifically citing the San Francisco International Airport/Community Roundtable, and explained how such efforts can help bring about resolutions that work for all parties involved. He also testified to the significant strides made in noise reduction technology and emphasized the importance of continuing the push for future technologies. Finally, Mr. McGrann explained the importance of continuing on-going NOISE mitigation efforts such as compatible land use planning and insulation programs, so that positive resolutions can be reached in communities affected by aviation noise.

Mr. McGrann also took the opportunity to acknowledge the work the committee has done on noise mitigation, and thank Chairman Oberstar for his long-time support of noise mitigation that earned him the *NOISE Lifetime Achievement and Environmental Champion Award in 2003*.

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