

# Washington N.O.I.S.E. Watch

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION TO INSURE A  
SOUND-CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT (NOISE)

SEPTEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2007

## **NOISE November Policy Summit**

The annual National Organization to Insure a Sound-controlled Environment (NOISE) November Policy Summit is being held at the National League of Cities 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress of Cities conference in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 16<sup>th</sup>. The event will begin with a breakfast at 8:00 AM and a federal relations update and general discussion at 8:30 AM. The policy summit will take place at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in room 224. Also be sure to stop by the NOISE booth in the exhibit hall of the convention center. Visit [aviation-noise.org](http://aviation-noise.org) for future NOISE events and organization updates.

## **3-Month Extension and Threatened White House Veto on Proposed FAA Reauthorization**

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, the white house released a statement threatening to veto the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (HR 2881) unless major changes were made in the set of fees and taxes used to pay for air traffic control system upgrades. The statement said that HR 2881 “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.” While the House Ways and Means Committee has approved 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 claims 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.

HR 2881 has been scheduled for discussion on the House floor on September 20<sup>th</sup>. The House Rules Committee is expected to approve a rule that would include the per gallon fuel tax and potentially a three-month extension of the FAA’s authorization when the bill is debated on the 20<sup>th</sup>. If approved, the three month extension would allow the FAA to continue collecting its excise taxes at the current rates until December 31<sup>st</sup>. This extension will likely be necessary due to the ending of the FAA’s authorization on September 30<sup>th</sup> and the many issues with the reauthorization bill the will need to be resolved in conference committee.

## **Proposal to Increase Airport PFCs Could Lead to Nationwide Runway Expansions**

The House is considering a bill supported by airport lobbying groups that proposes an increase in Personal Facility Charges (PFCs) cap at airports across the nation. In the current version of the bill the cap would increase from \$4.50 to \$7 per airport. Airports say that this increase is necessary to fund runway expansions to decrease air congestion. Airlines have stated that they oppose the cap increase because imposes unfair cost burdens on consumers and could prevent families from flying as much as they do currently. Only 58 percent of Airports allowed to charge PFCs do, but the cap increase would still generate up to \$1 billion in additional revenue.

Congressmen Nick Lampson and Ted Poe seek to offer an amendment to remove the PFC cap increase. Congressmen James Obestar and John Micah have stated their opposition to the amendment.

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## **FAA Administrator to Leave Post**

FAA Administrator Marion Blakely will be leaving her position at the end of this month to become the head of Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), the leading lobbying group for the aerospace industry. Marion has come under fire for the increasing delays experienced at airports across the nation, especially in New York City area. While the FAA contended that the delays were due to inadequate funding on the part of congress, critics blamed the delays on mismanagement and increased FAA fighting with air traffic controllers. Vermont Lieutenant Governor Brain Dubie and former FAA Deputy Administrator Barbara Berret are both rumored to be potential successors of Blakely.

## **Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) Lawsuit Update**

Homeowners living near the Minneapolis-St. Paul international airport filed a lawsuit against the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) in 2005 alleging that MAC agreed to expand its residential sound insulation program to include homes in the 60-64 DNL zones as a response to airport expansion. MAC, in an effort to settle the class action lawsuit, has offered an agreement that would provide nearly \$65 million in noise mitigation benefits to over 4,400 homeowners. The money would be used to pay for or refund the purchase of noise mitigation materials and some money would be set aside to pay a fraction of the plaintiff's attorney fees.

Minneapolis, Egan, and Richfield who filed a similar lawsuit have decided not to accept the agreement. The cities differ with MAC on which DNL contour maps to use and how to use the maps to determine which homes receive funding. MAC would provide assistance to individual homes within the contour while the cities have stated that entire

neighborhoods should be covered if there are some homes of that neighborhood within the contour map. The cities have until July 23<sup>rd</sup> to offer a counter agreement. Judge Aldrich, who is presiding over both lawsuits, has given a partial ruling requiring MAC to begin mitigation work on homes in the 64 DNL contour by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008.

## **Boeing Company Goes "Green"**

Boeing unveiled its new 787 Dreamliner jet on July 8<sup>th</sup>. This new jet is capable of carrying 330 passengers and uses 20% less fuel than similar-sized aircrafts. Boeing said that the jet will have bigger windows, raised cabin pressure and humidity to reduce the amount of headaches and itchy eyes, and the jet itself will "greatly" reduce the noise footprint. Boeing stated that due to its specially treated engines noise emissions will be reduced by as much as 60%. The Dreamliner has attracted attention and, more importantly for Boeing, buyers; there are currently 600 orders placed from 47 customers. The 787's first delivery will be made in May of 2008.

In further efforts to "green" their fleet Boeing has begun using GE's Flight Management System (FMS) for the first time in Europe. This system enables the airplane to use Advanced Continuous Descent Approach (A-CDA) or the "Green Approach" by flying the aircraft at idle thrust from cruise through landing. FMS, which has only been used on Boeing's 737s, features a 4-dimensional trajectory downlink that air traffic controllers can use to manage traffic flow using Required Time of Arrival (RTA), a precision positioning and time guidance tool. RTA assists in creating flight profiles which will increase efficiency thus reducing a significant amount of greenhouse gas and noise emissions.

## **Unease Over FAA Flight Plan Redesign**

The FAA is near completion on an airspace redesign project that would span five states including New York and New Jersey. The current flight plan takes approximately 70 percent of large and medium sized jets on a path down the Delaware River; the redesign would have those

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same jets make a much sharper turn after takeoff in order to pass over the counties of Delaware and Gloucester. FAA officials have stated they will attempt to limit flights late at night and early morning but those statements have done little to ease the concerns of the soon to be affected residents.

Rockland, NY is a model and representative example of a community that is apprehensive towards the redesign. Under the current flight plan most aircrafts that fly overhead are already at altitudes of 10,000 feet or higher thus having little noise impact. The redesign would require 200-600 flights per day to be redirected over Rockland with altitudes between 5000-6000 feet. The FAA insists that the increased noise impacts endured by the more than 11,000 residents would be “slight to moderate” despite the acknowledgement by FAA spokesperson Jim Peters saying that the redesign will result in an average of one overhead flight per every three minutes between the hours of 6 am and midnight. These concerns are not isolated in the Rockland, NY community, but have been widespread in the affected areas, prompting Senator Hillary Clinton (NY) to become involved. Senator Clinton has called on the FAA to schedule meetings to address citizen concerns. The FAA expects to decide on a plan in September.

## **Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Grants**

The FAA’s Airport Improvement Program awards grants to public and some private airports for planning, development, or noise compatibility and mitigation projects. Grants given to large and medium hubs cover 75 percent of the costs or 80 percent for noise program mitigation. Small airports receive coverage for 95 percent of the total project cost. Grants awarded between 4/26/07 and 6/26/07 totaled nearly \$2 billion.

48 airports were given grants for noise mitigation and compatibility projects. These projects demonstrate clear progress in the fight against excessive aviation noise. Highlighted below are grants that were awarded to a few airports with known and lengthy histories of excessive noise issues:

- **Los Angeles International Airport:** (1) a \$3 million grant for noise mitigation measures for residences in the airport’s 70-74 DNL contour in El Segundo, (2) a \$5 million grant for noise mitigation measures for residences within the airport’s 70-74 DNL contour in Los Angeles County.
- **Orlando International Airport:** a \$845,597 grant for noise mitigation measures for public school sound insulation.
- **Chicago O’Hare International Airport:** (1) a \$3 million grant for noise mitigation measures for public buildings (2) \$18 million grant and a (3) \$2,256,928 grant for noise mitigation measures for residences within the airport’s 65-69 DNL contour.
- **Newark Liberty International Airport:** a \$11,884,519 grant for noise mitigation measures for an elementary school in Kearny, NJ.
- **La Guardia Airport in New York:** (1) \$3,975,290, (2) \$2,069,519, and (3) \$1,574,358 for school soundproofing.
- **San Antonio International Airport:** a \$6,094,446 grant for noise mitigation measures for residences within the 65-69 DNL contour.

This list is in no way exhaustive. For the complete list of grants visit the FAA’s website.

## **NOISE Legislator of the Year- Congressman David Scott of Georgia’s 13<sup>th</sup> District**

Congressman David Scott (GA-13) is accustomed to dealing with aviation noise issues since the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is located right in his district. The Congressman is a member of the Congressional Noise Abatement Caucus and has worked tirelessly to address the noise concerns of his citizens. The even-handed Congressman understands that the Atlanta Airport is major economic powerhouse but believes that “the airport must be a good neighbor to surrounding communities.”

Congressman Scott’s continued fight on behalf of his citizens regarding environmental concerns caused by aviation has earned him

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NOISE's "Legislator of the Year Award." Congressman Scott now joins the ranks of previous award winners Congressman James Oberstar (MN-8), Senator David Vitter (LA), Congressman Bobby Jindal (LA-1), Congressman Jim Ramstad (MN-3), and former Congresswoman Anne Northrup.