

NOISE

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION TO INSURE A SOUND-CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT
The National Aviation Noise Lobby • An Affiliate of the National League of Cities

WASHINGTON NOISE WATCH

December 1, 2004

FEDERAL AIRPORT FUNDING UPDATE

Congress returned to a “lame duck” session after the elections to finish its annual appropriations work. Nine of the thirteen annual appropriations bills that fund the federal government, including the bill that funds the Federal Aviation Administration, were rolled into a mammoth “omnibus” appropriations bill. Congress passed the Fiscal Year 2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill on November 20. However, shortly after passing the bill several Members of Congress noticed a provision that would give the Appropriations Committee the authority to review an individual citizen’s tax returns. The provision was inserted into the bill at the last moment and without prior Congressional review; indeed no member has taken responsibility for authoring it. Consequently the matter has proven quite controversial, and has stalled final passage of the bill until Congress reconvenes to delete the offending provision. It is expected to do so on December 6, thereby clearing the bill for the President’s signature into law.

The FAA funding issue is important to local communities because the legislation sets the funding level for the Airport Improvements Program (AIP), which is the primary federal account for funding local noise mitigation efforts. The Omnibus Appropriations bill funds the FAA at \$13.6 billion, which is \$219 million, or 2 percent, less than in fiscal 2004 and \$335 million less than the President requested in his budget submission. However, the AIP is funded at \$3.5 billion, an increase of \$265 million from last year’s level.

NOISE Members should contact their Members of Congress to explore the possibility of securing a designation of federal AIP funds for noise mitigation efforts in their community. To complement this effort and because passenger flights are up while federal funding is expected to be tight in the near future, NOISE members may consider working with their airport to use a larger percentage of their Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) for noise mitigation as well (see story below).

PFC’s INCREASINGLY USED TO FUND NOISE MITIGATION PROJECTS

More airports are using the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) to fund noise mitigation projects in the surrounding community, according to an analysis by Anne Kohut in the *Airport Noise Report*. (PFC’s are charges an airport collects on each passenger ticket that uses the airport.) According to the report, \$2.6 billion of the total \$46.9 billion collected PFC revenue was earmarked to fund noise mitigation efforts. This represents an increase of \$55.1 million over 2003 levels, and \$513 billion over 2002 levels. The number of airports utilizing PFC’s for noise mitigation is increasing as well. 83 airports nationwide are using PFC’s for noise mitigation, an increase of seven airports over 2003.

One of the most common refrains local communities hear from their airport neighbor with respect to noise mitigation is that there is not sufficient local or federal funding to provide an aggressive noise mitigation agenda. In light of this information, NOISE members may consider requesting that the airport adopt a policy of earmarking a higher percentage of the PFC’s it collects, money that it controls and that is raised at the airport, to fund mitigation in their communities.

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