

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2013

Mr. Michael P. Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Mr. Huerta:

As representatives whose urban districts include one of the world's busiest commercial airports, we are writing to urge the FAA to expedite its four-year-long review of the air traffic noise metrics that governs airport operations and to institute changes to those measurements to better protect the health and well-being of our constituents.

Specifically, we question whether the 65 DNL metric, which has been in place since the early-1980s, remains a reliable measure of the true impact of aircraft noise. We wonder whether a measurement, which statistically minimizes the most annoying disruptions by averaging them over the year, reflects the true level of discomfort experienced by residents living under the O'Hare International Airport flight path.

The 65 DNL originated when skies everywhere were emptier. But the FAA's own Aerospace Forecast projects that revenue passenger miles—the standard for measuring commercial air traffic volume—will nearly double over the next two decades. Similarly, the number of operations at FAA and contract towers is expected to increase by more than 45 percent from current levels.

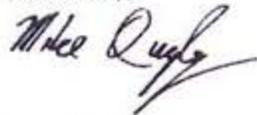
These are not mere statistics to the hundreds of thousands of residents who live under the flight paths of the one of the nation's busiest airports. Constituents of the 5th and 9th Congressional Districts of Illinois will experience hundreds of additional flights—and pronounced noise pollution—every day, as the airport completes new runways and the growing economy puts more planes in the sky.

We understand that air travel is a key component of the U.S. economy. And we appreciate that commercial aircraft are quieter than ever.

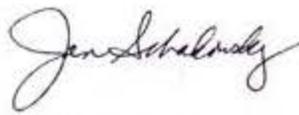
But the fact remains that more flights mean more noise. Our constituents, enduring the daily din of arriving and departing jets, deserve every possible consideration.

That's why your agency needs to address with all dispatch the 65 DNL issue. Economic growth—and efficient, safe air travel—should not be incompatible with vibrant, livable neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mike Quigley in black ink.

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Jan Schakowsky in black ink.

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress