



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

December 24, 2013

Ms. Arlene J. Mulder
Chairman, O'Hare Noise
Compatibility Commission
P.O. Box 1126
Des Plaines, IL 60017

Dear Ms. Mulder:

Thank you for your October 29 letter supporting the O'Hare Modernization Program and joining Illinois Congressional representatives in urging the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to expedite our multi-year review of the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) 65 decibels (dB) noise metric. We believe you are aware that the FAA established the existing standard based on the best available information and in coordination with a number of other Federal agencies in response to a statutory mandate for a single national standard. Any policy revisions would be subject to both interagency coordination and a transparent public review process to inform the FAA's final determination.

Since the last public workshop on this subject in 2010, the FAA has worked to create a noise research roadmap to plan research on noise impacts for the next eight to ten years. As part of that roadmap, the FAA is currently conducting research to determine the appropriateness of the continued use of the DNL 65 dB metric. This research primarily involves a national survey to evaluate the American public's annoyance reaction to aircraft noise in the current operating environment.

The current anticipated time for completing the national survey and the analysis of survey results is December 2015. The national survey is a major initial step in the FAA review. We are moving as quickly as possible within the constraints of the sequential nature of much of this work. The results of this study will be used to determine whether further consideration of changes to the FAA's use of the DNL 65 dB noise metric is warranted. The development and coordination of any new policy would not take place until after the completion of the national survey and consideration of other metrics.

I hope this response clarifies the current status of the FAA noise research roadmap and outlook for the DNL 65 dB review. The FAA appreciates your interest in the timely completion of this effort while ensuring the scientific integrity of the work.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me or Roderick Hall, Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Huerta', with a circled flourish at the end.

Michael P. Huerta
Administrator