



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

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

December 24, 2013

The Honorable Michael Quigley
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Quigley:

Thank you for your October 7 letter, cosigned by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, raising issues about the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) 65 decibels (dB) noise metric and urging the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to expedite our multi-year review of this metric. The FAA established the existing standard 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.

As you may be aware, the FAA is currently conducting research to determine the appropriateness of the continued use of the DNL 65 dB metric. This research primarily involves developing a national survey to evaluate the American public's annoyance reaction to aircraft noise in the current operating environment. Work began a couple of years ago through an Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) project. The goal of the ACRP project is to develop the methodology and draft questionnaire for the national survey. The ACRP project is progressing well and is currently on schedule for completion in early 2014. In addition, we have completed an assessment and made a preliminary determination that the national survey will be administered at 20 airports across the United States, as a representative sample. Finally, we are also updating the noise contours around all 20 representative airports so we can link the survey findings to actual noise levels.

The current anticipated time for completing the national survey and the analysis of survey results is December 2015. The results of this study will be used to determine whether changes to the FAA's use of the DNL 65 dB noise metric are warranted. The development and coordination of new policy would take place after the completion of the national survey.

I hope this response clarifies the current status and outlook for the DNL 65 dB review. We are committed to completing it expeditiously while ensuring the scientific integrity of the work.

We have sent an identical letter to Congresswoman Schakowsky.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Huerta', with a circled number '1' at the end.

Michael P. Huerta
Administrator



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Michael P. Huerta
Administrator