



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

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

July 25, 2014

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 May 20 letter inquiring about the status of the research the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is conducting to evaluate annoyance reaction to aircraft noise in the current airport operating environment. As was mentioned in my December 23, 2013, response, the results of the research will be used to determine the appropriateness of the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) 65 decibels (dB) metric as the standard for residential land-use compatibility.

Since December, the research has been progressing well. We recently published a Federal Register Request for Comments regarding the Neighborhood Environmental Survey. The Notice can be found at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-06-12/pdf/2014-13686.pdf>. The comment period closes on August 11, 2014, and provides the public an opportunity to provide comment on the FAA's intention to request the Office of Management and Budget approval to undertake an information collection.

As you are aware, work began on this survey through an Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP). That work has finished and we expect the final report to be available on the Transportation Review Board's ACRP site this month. The goal of the ACRP project was to develop the methodology and draft questionnaire for the national survey. The FAA leveraged many of the findings of the ACRP project when determining the methodology for the national survey. You may find the information in the ACRP report very beneficial. I hope that you understand we are not at liberty of disclosing the airports to be included in the survey at this time as this could compromise the integrity of the process and results.

Given the necessary coordination and required Federal process for information collection, the timeline provided to you in December 2013 has shifted. It is currently anticipated that the national survey and the analysis of survey results will be completed in the middle of 2016. The national survey is a major 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 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.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me or Roderick D. 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 number '1' to the right.

Michael P. Huerta
Administrator