



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

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

SEP 4 2014

The Honorable Rahm Emanuel
Mayor of Chicago
121 N La Salle Street #507
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Mayor Emanuel:

Thank you for your July 3 letter supporting the O'Hare Modernization Program. You inquired 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 you may know, 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. The results of our current 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. Any policy revisions would be subject to both interagency coordination and a transparent public review process to inform the FAA's final determination.

The research has been progressing well. We published a Federal Register Request for Comments regarding the Neighborhood Environmental Survey. The comment period, which provided the public an opportunity to comment on the FAA's intention to request Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval to undertake an information collection, closed on August 11. FAA is currently finalizing the request to OMB, which includes responding to the public comments that we received.

As you are aware, work began on this survey through an Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP). That work has finished and the report is available on the Transportation Review Board's Web site at: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/acrp/acrp_webdoc_017.pdf. 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.

Given the necessary coordination and required Federal process for information collection, 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 research. 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

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 do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael P. Huerta', written in a cursive style.

Michael P. Huerta
Administrator