



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

NOV 18 2014

Great Lakes Region
2300 East Devon Avenue
Des Plaines, IL 60018

Thank you for your recent letter to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) concerning Flight Caps, arrival and capacity numbers, and the Fly Quiet Program.

Arrivals at O'Hare were capped in 2004 at 88 operations per hour during most hours of the day to alleviate extreme congestion until the first runway of the O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) could be opened. The extension to Runway 10L/28R that opened on September 25, 2008 and the new Runway 9L/27R that opened on November 20, 2008 are part of the OMP, the purpose of which is to address the projected needs of the Chicago region by reducing delays at O'Hare, and thereby enhancing the capacity of the National Airspace System. As planned, the FAA allowed the flight caps at O'Hare to expire on October 31, 2008. The aviation industry has been deregulated since 1978. The FAA does not have the authority to determine airline routes, destinations or schedules, but may intervene in extreme cases of congestion, such as the delays that were impacting O'Hare and the entire national air transportation system in 2004.

There currently is no maximum traffic that the FAA will allow at O'Hare. Activity level will be determined by the business plans of the airlines and other airport users. The FAA evaluated 1.194 million total annual takeoffs and landings 5 years after OMP completion. In 2013, O'Hare accommodated approximately 884,000 total take offs and landings. The FAA's EIS did determine that delays would once again grow after completion of the modernization effort to levels experienced in the early 2000's when the airport reaches approximately 1.4 million total annual take offs and landings. The FAA Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) is updated annually to estimate future traffic at major airports. You can access FAA's current TAF here: <http://aspm.faa.gov/main/taf.asp>.

In regard to mandating that "Fly Quiet" be the official policy for O' Hare, we refer you to the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), as the owner and operator of O'Hare Airport. The Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 defines very stringent requirements which airport operators must meet in order to establish mandatory noise management programs. The current Fly Quiet program at O' Hare, while not mandatory, is a result of years of collaboration between CDA and the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC). The FAA works in partnership with CDA, ONCC, and O'Hare's air carriers to execute this voluntary program. Any changes to the Fly Quiet program, or any effort to make the program mandatory, would need to be initiated by the CDA.

Thank you for sharing your perspective with the FAA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry D. Cooper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Barry D. Cooper
Regional Administrator
Great Lakes Region