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MIKE QUIGLEY
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
5TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT
TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT,
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EMERGING THREATS, RANKING MEMBER
NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY AND CYBERSECURITY

October 30, 2015

Mr. Barry Cooper
Director, Region V
Federal Aviation Administration

Ms. Ginger Evans
Commissioner, Department of Aviation
City of Chicago

Dear Mr. Cooper and Ms. Evans:

It has been two years since the runway 10C/28C opened at O'Hare, accompanied by the implementation of a predominantly east-west air traffic flow. Since that time, my office and I have fielded thousands of complaints from constituents angry over the noise pollution generated by the dramatic increase in air traffic over their homes and businesses.

While I understand there is now a proposal to begin rotating overnight traffic—a proposal that needs to be evaluated as quickly as possible—I ask your help in addressing another related issue which continues to disturb many residents of the 5th Congressional District.

Since the airspace redesign, many residents, particularly those living east of O'Hare, have been subjected to greater noise pollution because of an increasing trend that results in aircraft diverting from their conventional route to a shorter, lower path to save time and fuel. Rather than flying over Lake Michigan before turning west to land at O'Hare, pilots often chose to turn short of Lake Michigan and fly north and then west to land, thereby subjecting more Chicago-area communities to increased airplane noise.

While I understand that the practice does not violate safety regulations, the noise generated by aircraft flying at relatively low altitudes miles from the end of the runway is both disconcerting and intrusive. Residents have a right to be angered at the sight and sound of an O'Hare-bound 747 only 3,200 feet above the Lakeview neighborhood, which is more than 10 miles from the airport.

Like the plan to rotate runways at night, I believe eliminating – or minimizing – the practice of arriving planes taking shortcuts over our neighborhoods would offer some much-needed relief to residents. As a first step, I would like your help identifying how often airplanes engage in this practice and your suggestions on how we can minimize the disruptions it causes in neighborhoods throughout Chicago. After two years of continuous noise and with another runway opening next week, it is imperative that we explore all plausible avenues for relief.

I appreciate your offices' commitment to engaging the public in searching for solutions to noise pollution at O'Hare. I stand ready to assist you in any way possible to bring about positive change and look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Quigley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress