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85.5, 86, 87, 88, 89, 214
234, 299, 401

January 21, 2009

The Honorable Lynne A. Osmus
Acting Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Acting Administrator Osmus:

The O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC) believes the O'Hare Modernization Program at O'Hare International Airport is good for the efficiency of air travel, passenger safety and economic growth. With this growth and prosperity comes the realization that some Chicagoland residents are experiencing increased aircraft noise.

The ONCC is committed to initiating new and innovative discussions pertaining to aircraft noise metric standards for assessing aircraft noise impacts to residents surrounding airports. The Transportation Research Board in September 2008 notes "the expanding use of airport monitoring systems, flight-track systems and geographic information systems may make the evaluation of annoyance and single-event noise rich for examination."

The noise metrics used currently in assessing aircraft noise should be re-examined to ensure that frequency of flights and the resulting heightened annoyance to residents is accounted for appropriately. Further, the averaging of noise decibels throughout the day does not account for the times of significant annoyance for people living, working and attending schools beneath air traffic.

Our goal is to assist airports and the FAA by aggressively pursuing new technology and leveraging the tremendous amount of research accomplished by the FAA's Center of Excellence for Aircraft Noise and Emissions and its PARTNER Advisory Board, of which the ONCC is a contributing member.

The ONCC believes that the new technological advancements and tangible benefits of the FAA's NextGen and its proposed initiatives will result in additional mitigation measures as airports reinvent themselves.

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The ONCC has an established record of working together with the City of Chicago and suburban communities, the airlines, the FAA, the controllers and the pilots to reduce the impact of aircraft noise in the communities surrounding O'Hare. This approach has produced significant results – decreased aircraft noise and increased spending on sound insulation programs.

I look forward to discussing with you the re-evaluation of aircraft noise metrics to better protect the quality of life for residents living near O'Hare and airports nationwide together to expedite the examination of noise metric standards currently used in assessing aircraft noise.

Sincerely,



Arlene J. Mulder

Mayor, Village of Arlington Heights

Chairperson, O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission

cc: Carl Burleson, Director, Office of Energy and Environment, FAA

Barry Cooper, Administrator, Great Lakes Region, FAA

Brian Gilligan, Executive Director, O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission

Members, Illinois Congressional Delegation

Members, O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission