AIC2-1

MAY 1 8 2009

Dear .

Thank you for your letter dated April 25, 2009 about the increase in aircraft noise over your neighborhood caused by the new runway configuration at O'Hare International Airport.

The runway reconfiguration you refer to is part of the O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP), undertaken by the City of Chicago (City) to reduce congestion. You stated in your letter that the community was never notified of potential impacts of the OMP.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in coordination with other Federal agencies, prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for O'Hare Modernization. The projected use of the runways was disclosed in the EIS and source documents that were made available for public review and comment throughout the environmental process. Notice of the publication of the Draft EIS was issued in local newspapers, the Federal Register, the local TV media and on the FAA O'Hare Modernization EIS website. In January 2005, the Draft EIS was made available at the Harold Washington Library, the official repository in the Chicago Public Library system for Federal documents published for review and/or comment. Hundreds of pages of public comments on the Draft EIS were received and responded to by the FAA. In July 2005, after extensive review and public comment, the FAA published the Final EIS, and it was again sent to the library. It is unfortunate you feel your area of the City was not properly informed about the impacts of the project.

You also requested in your letter that the FAA reduce the impacts of the reconfiguration of O'Hare's runways. As directed by the U.S. Congress in the Aviation Safety and Noise Abatement Act (ASNA) of 1979, the FAA and other branches of the Federal government have established guidelines for noise compatibility based on annoyance. FAA Order 1050.1E, Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures, defines the threshold of significance for noise impacts as follows: "A significant noise impact would occur if analysis shows that the proposed action will cause noise sensitive areas to experience an increase in noise of DNL 1.5 dB or more at or above DNL 65 dB noise exposure when compared to the no action alternative for the same timeframe." The noise levels in the Edgewater community are in the range of 45 to 50 DNL. This means your area is not considered to be an area of significant noise impact. While we understand your concerns about noise generated by the new runway, homes in your area would not be eligible for soundproofing or other direct mitigation.

Nonetheless, the FAA is always seeking new technologies and procedures to reduce aircraft noise. The recent phase-out of air carrier aircraft that use older and louder engines (i.e. Stage 2 aircraft) has contributed greatly to the reduction in the number of homes exposed to high levels of aircraft noise. The FAA continues to participate with other Federal agencies, universities and industry groups in research to reduce noise impacts caused by our airports.

I hope you find this information useful. Should you need further information on this subject, please feel free to contact me at (847) 294-7294.

Sincerely,

for Original Signed by
JOYCE B. SCOTT

Barry D. Cooper
Regional Administrator
Great Lakes Region

cc: Brian Gilligan, Executive Director, O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission
Honorable Arlene Mulder, Chair, O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission
Honorable Mary Ann Smith, Alderman 48th Ward, City of Chicago