

DC METROPLEX BWI COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

August 1, 2017

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Van Hollen, Jr.
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andrew P. Harris, M.D.
1533 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
2416 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2002

The Honorable John P. Sarbanes
2444 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anthony G. Brown
1505 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John K. Delaney
1632 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin
431 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: FAA Reauthorization Bills

Dear Senators Cardin, VanHollen Jr. and Representatives Harris, Ruppersberger, Sarbanes, Brown, Hoyer, Delaney, Cummings and Raskin:

The DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable (Roundtable) was formed in March 2017 at the insistence of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as precondition to the FAA considering changes to address noise and other harmful effects of flight paths and procedures at or near BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport implemented in connection with the FAA's DC Metroplex/NextGen scheme. The Roundtable comprises community representatives appointed by Maryland State Legislators from districts near and affected by BWI air traffic and representatives of Anne Arundel and Howard County governments, all of whom are voting members. The Roundtable also has representatives from the Maryland Aviation Administration and the airline industry who are advisors to the Roundtable. The first and principal action of the Roundtable was a unanimous resolution to request the FAA to revert immediately to flight paths and procedures near BWI that existed prior to the implementation of DC Metroplex/NextGen in order to provide relief to harmed residents. This request was followed with strong letters of

support and similar requests from you, our Maryland Congressional Delegation, Governor Hogan and Anne Arundel and Howard County governments. Thank you for your support of our efforts to restore the *status quo ante* relative to airplane flight paths at BWI airport. We have been deeply engaged with the FAA in working toward that goal and we value the role you have played in bringing that collaboration about.

This letter is to ask that you consider supporting the efforts of our community on this topic more broadly. While our Roundtable is by charter concerned with the implementation of the FAA's District of Columbia Metroplex Project, our local noise and community involvement issues are derived from the national implementation of the NextGen project. The current FAA reauthorization bills being considered by the U.S. Congress offer an opportunity to create a more community sensitive approach to the ongoing implementation of the NextGen project. However, as currently drafted we believe that, S 1405, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2017 and HR 2997, The 21st Century AIRR Act, do far too little to address the pressing concerns of American citizens who are or will be severely impacted by the concentrated and amplified noise and pollution caused by NextGen flight path changes and procedures. The DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable therefore requests that S 1405 and HR 2997 be amended as follows, and urge that these amendments apply equally to the FAA or any successor organization.

1. Amend the FAA Mission Statement. The FAA Mission Statement currently reads - "Our Mission: Our continuing mission is to provide the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world." We urge Congress to amend the FAA Mission Statement to include "noise, health and other impacts to communities" along with efficiency, as a secondary consideration after safety. While nothing can be more important than safety in our skies, we believe that noise and adverse health impacts to communities should be included at least as equally important considerations as efficiency.
2. Add language that requires the FAA to disperse departure and arrival flight paths that are over established residential communities in order to avoid the concentrated, cumulative and recurring negative noise and environmental impacts on those communities of the implementation of the NexGen project.
3. We broadly support the FAA developing more modern criteria for determining the severity of airplane noise and other harmful effects of aircraft traffic. The effort should be comprehensive and the FAA should ensure affected community participation.
4. Clarify that the FAA is required to follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures. Eliminate provisions that allow for categorical exclusions for programs that modify flight paths and procedures that could have adverse effects on the residents. All post-implementation assessment of flight procedure changes shall include verification that the new procedures are compliant with any applicable NEPA Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements. Notwithstanding the foregoing, compliance with environmental requirements should not be an impediment to the FAA restoring the *status quo ante* to eliminate harm caused by NextGen and related actions.
5. Add provisions to improve the understanding of health and environmental impacts of

concentrated airplane noise and pollution.

- a. Fund noise metric and measurement studies at all Class Bravo airports in the country, to better understand the effect of concentrating noise and pollution in flight rails.
 - b. Require the FAA to report annually to the Congress and the public about the public health impacts of airplane noise and emissions.
6. Amend the Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 to allow airports to impose nighttime curfews, capacity limitations at saturated airports, and other noise abatement improvements.
7. Should any proposal to privatize air traffic control be adopted (such as the proposal in HR 2997), ensure that the NEPA laws and regulation apply to any modifications to flight paths or procedures that become the responsibility of the privatized entity.

In our opinion, these recommended changes are necessary to begin to restore a balance between the needs of the nation's transportation system, and its immediate stakeholders, and community stakeholders in the ongoing and much-needed improvement to our nation's air traffic control system.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (443) 995-0259 or by email at ltbrasher@gmail.com.

Sincerely,



Lance Brasher
Chair

cc: Members of the DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable