



City of Phoenix

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

NEWS

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CITY OF PHOENIX SUES FAA OVER AIRCRAFT NOISE

- The City of Phoenix is filing suit against the FAA over 2014 flight path changes
- The FAA's actions have caused the community extreme discomfort with many unable to sleep at night or pursue normal daily activities
- The FAA has withheld information and ignored reasonable solutions

(June 1, 2015) – For the past eight months, the City of Phoenix has pleaded with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to reduce the residential noise impact of changed flight paths in the Phoenix area on September 18, 2014. The FAA and airlines claim that these flight paths increase safety and provide fuel savings.

After significant public outcry over the FAA having not held any public process about the changes, the FAA convened a working group earlier this year to find options for noise relief. But no real options were considered by the FAA. Last week the FAA and key airlines met to discuss options directly with Sky Harbor, however per a letter from FAA Regional Administrator Glen Martin today, no changes will be made to provide meaningful and comprehensive noise relief.

Therefore, the City of Phoenix, on behalf of its residents, is filing a lawsuit against the FAA, alleging that the agency has created a negative impact on the Phoenix community without proper due process, notification and consideration.

“For decades we have struck the right balance between operating an urban airport and protecting the quality of life of our nearby residents. The FAA upset that balance when they -- without notice – changed the departure routes at Sky Harbor,” said Mayor Greg Stanton. “Despite numerous attempts to resolve this the FAA has not proposed any meaningful changes. Therefore we’re left with no choice but to sue.”

While the City of Phoenix does not regulate flight paths, it has attempted to propose multiple alternative solutions that would dramatically reduce the number of residents affected while retaining 80% of the desired fuel and efficiency benefits of the controversial new routing. None of these options will be entertained by the FAA.

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According to Councilman Michael Nowakowski of District 7, “In addition to this lawsuit, I will actively pursue collaboration with other cities which have been affected in similar ways due to the FAA’s RNAV flight changes as well as work with our federal delegation to affect legislation that would reverse this type of action and prevent future actions by the FAA that have such unacceptable outcomes to our communities.”

Phoenix District 8 City Councilwoman Kate Gallego said, “The FAA decided to move a highway in the sky without following legal requirements to consult with stakeholders. The City tried to proactively address our concerns but the FAA was not interested in truly working with us.”

In addition, the FAA told Arizona’s Historic Preservation Office that noise from the new routes would not interfere with hearing people talking, television, radio, etc. That has proven untrue.

“Transparency and fairness should be standards by which government functions so as to be accountable to the people. The FAA has not functioned openly, and as a result, Phoenix residents would be burdened further by unreasonably requiring them to replace windows in their historic homes to mitigate noise. It simply is not fair nor just.” said District 4 Councilwoman Laura Pastor.

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