



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

FEB 09 2016



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Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of Transportation concerning aircraft noise and pollution at New York airports. The Secretary has asked me to respond to your letter. I appreciate you taking the time to share your concerns. I understand that aircraft noise can be disruptive and result in a variety of effects. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has a long history of studying noise related effects in order to minimize them to the extent possible through research and development and mitigation measures.

As you know the FAA's primary mission is to ensure the safe and efficient use of our nation's navigable airspace. The agency does not have the authority to prohibit aircraft overflights of a particular geographic area unless the operation is unsafe, or the aircraft is operated in a manner inconsistent with Federal Aviation Regulations. In order to handle air traffic demands, runway configurations are used in accordance with runway selection criteria. Air Traffic's runway selection is based on several factors which include the following: runway availability, wind, weather, operational efficiency, and noise considerations.

Please recognize that the overall noise footprint from all of the aircraft operating in the National Airspace System (NAS) continues to be reduced from levels experienced in past years. The primary reason for this reduction is that aircraft are becoming quieter as the technology advances to improve fuel efficiency and environmental performance. We are advancing the maturation of technological improvements through our research and development program in hopes of bringing these low noise technologies to the marketplace sooner. To the extent that airlines can afford to purchase and operate newer aircraft with these advanced technologies, this trend may continue or accelerate. In addition, more efficient air traffic control techniques allow aircraft to get on the ground and climb out of the airport terminal area more quickly.


The FAA has provided grants to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for four separate 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 150 Airport Noise Compatibility Studies. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is currently conducting studies for John F. Kennedy (JFK) International, Newark Liberty (EWR) International, LaGuardia (LGA), and

Teterboro (TEB) airports to identify areas exposed to aircraft noise of day-night average sound level (DNL) 65 decibels (dB) and greater and recommend measures for reducing or mitigating aircraft noise in those areas. These recommendations will eventually be submitted to the FAA for consideration under 14 CFR Part 150 regulations. To view more information about the studies, including the project schedule, meeting information, documents, links and FAQs, and to join the mailing list to receive project updates and announcements, please visit: <http://panynjpart150.com/>

In the meantime, while these studies are still ongoing, the FAA strongly encourages the discussion of current aircraft noise issues and concerns within community roundtable groups. This way all of the community residents being affected by aircraft noise can be involved in understanding the state and extent of the problem. And if the community roundtable group has ideas for mitigation then those can also be discussed to reach a consensus before engaging the airport and FAA to consider potential changes in operations. We have found that given the nature of aircraft noise any suggested operational changes will undoubtedly result in some shifting of noise from one community to another, and this should be carefully considered.

I hope that you find this information helpful. We are taking resident's concerns seriously and continuing to work on ways to reduce the environmental effects of aviation. We appreciate your interest in the safe and efficient operation of the airspace system.

Sincerely,


For Dr. Lourdes Maurice
Executive Director
FAA Office of Environment and Energy