

# The FAA created a superhighway in the sky

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*A jet takes off from Ronald Reagan National Airport in Arlington on Sept. 1, 2017. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)*

The Jan. 22 Metro article “[Fate of D.C. flight noise now up to three judges](#)” reported on oral arguments in D.C. residents’ litigation over airplane noise generated by the Federal Aviation Administration’s implementation of the NextGen GPS/satellite-performance-based navigation (PBN) system. It is impossible to place noise barriers in the sky, as is done for excessive noise on highways. PBN design results in superhighways in the sky where airplanes use identical flight paths for airport approaches and departures.

It has been an interesting back-and-forth with the FAA on the DC Metroplex BWI Roundtable dealing with similar issues at Baltimore-Washington International Marshall Airport — interesting for what the FAA does not do. **The FAA has freely admitted that PBN does not consider communities in its flight designs and cannot even show to the roundtable the relevant areas affected.** (We have found that PBN does not follow the noise flight path zones established at BWI.) Further, airplane-generated noise is based on a 1971 noise standard and uses an FAA noise model that has not been validated by actual measurements at ground level.

**The FAA has a monopoly on the airspace and has done less than the bare minimum to engage with communities affected by PBN.** The roundtable has been meeting since last March, and not once have we had a person come from the FAA’s environment office to speak with us. **The FAA apparently only responds to litigation.**

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The writer is a member of the DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable.

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