

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

December 28, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President-elect of the United States
Office of the Biden-Harris Transition
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President-elect Biden:

You will soon name several new appointees to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), including the Deputy FAA Administrator, the Chief Operating Officer of the Air Traffic Organization, the Associate Administrator for Airports, and the Assistant Administrator for Policy, International Affairs, and Environment. While the FAA and the aviation industry face many high-profile challenges, as Members of the Quiet Skies Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives, we write to bring to your attention the overlooked problem of the disruption to human health and local economies from aircraft noise. We urge you to appoint officials who will include creative approaches to solving noise problems in the work ahead.

We represent Americans from diverse locales across the country, united by grave concern over the toll that noise can take on the people living with a constant drone of aircraft. Planes fly low or late at night, near homes and schools; flights arrive and depart within minutes of each other; and the FAA's NextGen project has concentrated flight paths without consideration of the people below. As a result of these policies, millions of Americans suffer from sleep disruption; exacerbation of high blood pressure and other chronic diseases; learning loss in schools; and economic losses to businesses ranging from tourism to technology to entertainment.

For decades the agency has consistently downplayed and overlooked the toll of noise disruption on human lives and communities. The NextGen project to update the technology used to control air traffic has brought foreseeable problems that could have been headed off if the agency, early in its planning stages, had considered what happens on the ground as well as what happens in the skies and included in the process business owners, local elected officials, airport noise roundtables, health advocates, and others likely to be affected.

As Members of Congress, we all fly as part of our work. We agree that the FAA's mission to maintain the safety and efficiency of our airspace is paramount. But we also believe that better noise control and full participation from all involved and affected can only enhance that safety and efficiency, not detract from it. The new appointees at the FAA should be committed to inventive problem-solving, to listening and bringing all affected parties into the discussion, and to finding win-win solutions. These leaders should embrace bold ideas, work in good faith with the Quiet Skies Caucus and Congress, and pledge to alleviate noise disruption on the ground, with a renewed focus on inclusiveness.

We look forward to learning of your choices for the FAA and to working with your administration in the 117th Congress to combat aircraft noise. Thank you for your leadership, and congratulations on your presidency.

Sincerely,



Karen Bass
Member of Congress

/s/

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

/s/

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

/s/

Stephen Lynch
Member of Congress

/s/

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

/s/

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

/s/

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/

Ed Case
Member of Congress

/s/

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

/s/

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

/s/

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

/s/

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Cc: Pete Buttigieg, Nominee for Secretary of Transportation