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Grace Meng

Congress of the United States

Sixth District, New York

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

As you begin to draft this year's Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) appropriation legislation, I respectfully request you do everything in your power to address the issue of airplane noise. New York's Sixth Congressional District, which I represent, lies between John F. Kennedy International Airport to the south and LaGuardia Airport to the north. Frankly, my constituents are constantly bombarded by two of the top-twenty busiest airports in the nation. They need relief.

With that in mind, I ask that you craft this year's bill in a manner that is consistent with the following principles: 1) noise reduction technology research *must* be a priority, 2) any changes made to existing flight paths should only occur after consultation with the communities that will be affected by increased levels of airplane noise, and 3) new technologies and measurements that more accurately capture the impact airplane noise levels have upon a community need to be developed. Accordingly, I hope you will consider the following requests for the fiscal year 2017 THUD bill:

Programmatic Funding Level Requests

1) FAA – Airport Technology Research – Noise Programs – \$1,500,000

- This requested amount is double the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request. By funding the Noise Programs account at \$1.5 million, the survey of airport communities currently being performed (in order to collect noise annoyance and sleep disturbance data) will not only continue, but be expanded.

2) **FAA – Research, Engineering, and Development – Environment and Energy Program – \$16,074,000**

- This requested amount is equal to the fiscal year 2016 enacted amount, which is \$1,061,000 above the President’s budget request for fiscal year 2017. The Environment and Energy Program account is simply too important to cut by more than one million dollars. As the President’s own budget states, the following items (among others) are goals for this fiscal year’s funding alone:
 - By 2017, complete engine exhaust particulate matter measurements that are required to support the ICAO CAEP standard.
 - By 2017, advance the scientific understanding of noise impacts on social welfare and health.
 - By 2018, release Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT) Version 3 with improved noise, emissions, and fuel burn estimation methodologies.
 - By 2019, explore appropriate metric for community exposure to aircraft noise.

Bill Language Requests

- 1) *Sec. ____*. None of the funds made available by this Act or any other Act may be used to issue, file, or presume, as described in section 213 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, a categorical exclusion for a navigation performance or other performance based navigation procedure if the community in which the airport is located has not first been consulted or engaged on the matter through a formal comment period.
- 2) *Sec. ____*. None of the funds made available by this Act or any other Act may be used to approve or implement a new flight path over any area in which the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) is currently 55 or above.
- 3) *Sec. ____*. The Secretary shall prescribe such regulations and guidance as may be necessary for the creation of a new stage 5 airplane noise standard that is consistent with the International Civil Aviation Organization Annex 16, Chapter 14 noise standard.
- 4) *Sec. ____*. The Secretary shall submit to Congress a report discussing possible updates and alternatives that may be made to the current manner in which airplane noise is generally measured in communities near airports. In reviewing possible improvements to Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) measurements, the Secretary shall review the decision to use DNL – a 24 hour average noise measurement – when the majority of flight routes do not operate 24 hours a day.

Report Language Requests

Involving the community in the updating of the Community Involvement Manual. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 required the FAA to update its Community Involvement Manual with respect to new air traffic procedures, public outreach, and community involvement, with a specific requirement to enhance community engagement and proactively address concerns pertaining to navigation. The Committee awaits this update, and encourages the FAA to actively solicit input from communities with airports when developing the policies and procedures that will be used to remedy their grievances.

Thank you for your time spent reviewing these requests. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have, and please do everything in your power to offer my constituents, as well as those that are similarly situated across the country, relief from the ever-increasing levels of airplane noise.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress