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Grace Meng
Congress of the United States
Sixth District, New York

April 30, 2015

Gina McCarthy
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

I write in strong support of increasing the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) role in addressing noise pollution by coordinating all federal noise control activities concerning airplanes and helicopters.

Despite Congress' discontinuation of funding for the Office of Noise Abatement and Control (ONAC) at the request of the Reagan Administration in 1981, under their current authority, the EPA maintains these responsibilities. Pursuant to the Noise Control Act of 1972 and the Quiet Communities Act of 1978, the EPA retains the authority to investigate and study noise and its effect; disseminate information to the public regarding noise pollution and its adverse health effects; respond to inquiries on matters related to noise; and evaluate the effectiveness of existing regulations for protecting public health and welfare.

Even with the EPA's current noise pollution authority, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is tasked with air transport-related noise concerns. I have witnessed an inconceivable lack of coordination between airport operators and the FAA regarding noise control. While the airport operators are deemed responsible for noise, the FAA is responsible for flight paths and regulating the airline industry. The FAA neither has the resources nor the mission priorities to adequately address intolerable levels of noise in the best interests of my constituents. I fully support the necessity of creating an efficient and safe airspace, and the FAA continues to take tremendous strides to improve those areas. However, it has failed to convince me and the public that it can objectively handle the problems caused by noise pollution. The EPA is better suited to study the consequences of noise pollution and propose measures to ameliorate this ongoing problem.

Many Members of Congress have supported the FAA taking steps to reduce airplane and helicopter noise over communities, and I will continue to support these initiatives. The FAA should lower its acceptable level of noise pollution, create more optimal flight paths, and encourage mechanical upgrades that reduce noise on a per flight basis. However, in order to properly protect human health and the environment from excessive noise, the EPA must fully

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include flight noise in its jurisdiction. I have no doubt that its involvement is the best way forward to coordinate the efforts of air carriers, the FAA, and airport operators.

I ask that you inform me on the types of actions you are able to take under existing authority, and the practical effect on my constituents resulting from the FAA's lack of noise pollution reduction and mitigation. Please specify how re-establishing ONAC would broaden your authority and resources.

Sincerely,

Grace Meng
Member of Congress