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Grace Meng

Congress of the United States

Sixth District, New York

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September 6, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

I write to alert you to a recent journal article entitled, “The Trade-Off between Optimizing Flight Patterns and Human Health: A Case Study of Aircraft Noise in Queens, NY, USA” published in the most recent edition of the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. In it, the authors write the following:

“We examined the potential health and economic impacts of a change in one flight route, TNNIS Climb, in New York. This route was originally used only during the U.S. Open tennis tournament, but has become year-round since NextGen was implemented in 2012...based on a subset of health and economic endpoints that was modelled in this study, it is likely that limiting the use of TNNIS would be cost-effective relative to its year-round use. Doing so would prevent much more disease at a much lower cost than commonly used clinical health prevention modalities, such as colon cancer screening or mammography...we did not attempt to add further cost savings from productivity or other spillover effects for people on ground, such as future lost tax revenue, social service consumption, and crime costs associated with lower educational attainment.”

The article is well-researched and well-written. And, frankly, the results are shocking. It states that “The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey...[n]oise corridor data showed that all year use of TNNIS has produced loud and frequent noise for people on ground, especially persons living in the Community Boards 7 and 11 of Queens, NY, USA.” Further, “NextGen holds great potential for improving our lives. However, it also appears to produce an increase in disability and death, at least in New York City.”

Please, help us.

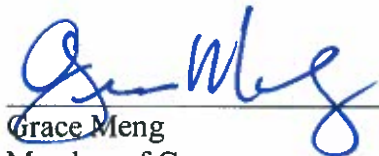
Secretary Chao, respectfully, please require a review of the use of the TNNIS Climb flight path. It is destroying my constituents' quality of life, and, according to this study, even leading to premature deaths. In America in 2018, this should not be happening. There are alternative routes, some of which were regularly relied upon as recently as this decade. Please require the FAA review this matter immediately.

In addition to reviewing, and ultimately eliminating, the use of the TNNIS Climb, I also request the following:

- 1) Release of results from the National Aircraft Annoyance Survey;
- 2) Release of the underlying data generated by the Annoyance Survey;
- 3) Inclusion of community representatives as members of the Next Gen Advisory Committee (NAC); and
- 4) Information regarding NAC's plans to improve operational performance in the Northeast Corridor, including any relevant upcoming meetings at which the issue will be discussed.

Secretary Chao, you have visited my Congressional district on numerous occasions. I know you know how important the issue of plane noise is to communities in Queens, New York. I request your assistance in addressing this matter, and thank you deeply for your time and consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Grace Meng", is written over a horizontal line.

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Cc: Mr. Daniel Elwell, Acting Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)