

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 11, 2016

The Honorable Michael P. Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta:

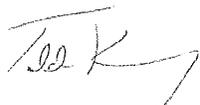
We write to you today on behalf of thousands of our constituents who are adversely affected by excessive airplane noise. Many of the towns in Nassau County that we represent lie directly in the pathways of departing and approaching flights from John F. Kennedy International (JFK) and LaGuardia (LGA) airports, two of the busiest in the nation. Our communities have to struggle with airplane noise that negatively affects the health of their residents and reduces their overall quality of life. We appreciate the efforts of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) to study and reduce the impact of airplane noise on surrounding areas in the Part 150 program, but more needs to be done.

In 1976, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended the adoption of the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) to be the metric for quantifying aviation noise exposure. The FAA then set 65 decibels to be the DNL value at which federal funding would be available for soundproofing or other noise mitigation. The DNL represents the average noise levels over a 24-hour period, but a marked increase in the concentration of flights during the daytime hours may not result in a dramatic change in the DNL because of fewer flights during the overnight hours. Further, this threshold is outdated, relying on research that does not consider the complete effects of noise on individual residents. Therefore, we ask you to lower the acceptable DNL standard from 65 to 55 DNL.

We often hear from our constituents that their government does not listen to or care about their problems. As we continue to increase air travel in the U.S., we need to ensure robust community engagement as we research the environmental impacts of such expansion. Lowering the acceptable DNL threshold to 55 DNL would demonstrate that the FAA is committed to reducing the impact of airplane noise on local communities and including our citizens in federal policymaking.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to achieve quieter skies for our constituents.

Sincerely,



Todd Kaminsky
New York State Senator, 9th District



Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress, New York's 4th District