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Citizens Unite Nationwide to Protest FAA's NextGen Program

Sizable Demonstrations Expected at Major Airports and in US Cities

Nationwide -- Thousands of citizens in major cities across the country will be protesting on October 24th, in observance of #NoFlyDay — a national movement to restore peace and quiet to communities destroyed by the FAA's NextGen program.

The protests will draw attention to the FAA's brazen disregard of citizens' health and welfare brought on by NextGen, its program to redesign airspace and modernize air traffic control. Organizers cite skyrocketing noise pollution, and urge Congress to put the program on hold until major modifications are made.

"The FAA is in the process of building an interstate highway in the sky largely under the radar of the American public," said Patrick Meyer of #NoFlyDay Co-Sponsor Save Our Skies Santa Cruz. "Their formula is simple: tell as few people as possible, use vague language, and in some cases disregard community outreach and input all together. This is a gross violation of our right to due process under the law."

A History of Deception and Incompetence

In 2012, prioritizing the profits of big business airlines, the FAA deceived Congress by telling them NextGen would have "no significant noise impacts" and wrongfully touted increased fuel savings and reduced pollution. In a political coup, they convinced Congress to pass a bill that exempted NextGen from the environmental review process and from public hearings.

They've used these tactics to mislead communities and exploit disclosure requirements by not implementing new flight paths until after the statute of limitations had expired and the threat of lawsuits had passed.

"The FAA is intentionally using words that mean one thing to the American public that mean something completely different in FAA-speak," said Kevin Terrell of #NoFlyDay Co-Sponsor MSP Fair Skies. "To the FAA, 'no significant impact' is specifically defined as a community's noise level has not reached a certain threshold—not that the noise levels haven't increased significantly."

This FAA threshold (65 dB(A) DNL) is in fact an extraordinarily noisy environment usually found in neighborhoods directly surrounding airports. Now, in communities as far as 50 miles away from the airport, residents under NextGen flight paths are suffering from relentless overflights every 2-5 minutes that each time generates up to 1,000 times more noise than the ambient level they used to enjoy. The FAA deceptively still categorizes this as "no significant impact." More than a million noise complaints have flooded airports.

"Due to the public backlash, the FAA has shifted their tune on whether NextGen has had a significant impact," said Meyer. "Now they contend that they are 'reducing the noise footprint' of air traffic by consolidating flights onto superhighways. But what they are really doing is creating

communities with intolerable noise levels while freeing up future space for more planes, more noise, and more pollution.”

In the FAA’s reckless rush to implement NextGen they have also:

- **Failed to address safety issues in a timely manner:** One third of planes flying on Serfr One flight path in Northern California are violating class B airspace, posing a serious risk for a mid-air collision with non-commercial planes. Pilots have logged official reports of safety violations citing the poor design. Despite being informed of this issue in July 2015, the FAA has yet to address the design flaw.
- **Overrode local standards and agreements:** In cities like Minneapolis and Washington DC, they’ve ignored local runway use standards that protect neighboring communities from undue jet noise to push more capacity. Similarly in the San Francisco Bay Area, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo created an agreement with the FAA establishing minimum altitudes that the FAA chose to change with no process.
- **Ignored availability of nearby unpopulated corridors:** In Phoenix, the FAA changed flight paths from over the Salt River to directly over the historic downtown neighborhood.

The Solution

To protect all Americans from the health-related impacts of excessive jet noise, #NoFlyDay protesters are demanding the FAA:

- Immediately address noise levels in impacted communities
- Adopt stricter noise standards and conduct full Environmental Impact Statements
- Adopt a timely and transparent community engagement process

Congress has also begun to recognize this as a national issue that needs to be addressed. Last year the Quiet Skies Caucus was formed with Congressional representatives from across the country to advocate for solutions to jet noise. Recently, a bill was introduced to reinstate the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Noise Abatement to review and update the science to inform noise policy making. And just this past week, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee petitioned the group to hold a Congressional hearing on NextGen noise pollution.

“This is clearly an issue of national importance. We’re not talking about simply shifting noise from one community to another. Fortunately, NextGen technology is capable of achieving the FAA’s more admirable goals of efficiency and carbon reduction without causing so much stress, suffering and sleep loss,” said Terrell. “Americans should not accept unbearable levels of jet noise as a byproduct of a \$60+ billion dollar taxpayer-funded ‘modernization’ effort.”

Protest locations include: Boston | Minneapolis | San Francisco Bay Area | Phoenix | Greater Los Angeles | Seattle | San Diego

#NoFlyDay is a national campaign to restore the peace and quiet of the many communities recently destroyed by the FAA’s NextGen program. By uniting citizens across the country to not fly on October 24th and convening protests at major U.S. airports, #NoFlyDay will force the FAA to finally address the devastating noise impacts of NextGen. #NoFlyDay is cosponsored by Save Our Skies Santa Cruz and MSP Fair Skies and hosted in partnership with local organizations nationwide. www.noflyday.org