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## MEMORANDUM

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**To:** City of Huntington Beach  
**From:** Townsend Public Affairs, Inc.  
**Date:** February 19<sup>th</sup> 2020  
**Subject:** Aircraft Noise

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TPA has developed this briefing memo on the status of aircraft noise abatement issues in Congress and the federal government. Congress has not taken a concerted effort to pass legislation addressing aircraft noise abatement into law, but that has not prevented members from introducing legislation to address the issue. Additionally, House leadership seems interested in possibly addressing the issue in the upcoming Surface Transportation Reauthorization/Infrastructure bill, which is up for renewal in September. Leadership expressed the desire to provide funding specifically for aircraft noise abatement in a recent priorities list introduced in January.

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### Congress

Aircraft noise has been a recurring theme on Capitol Hill during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, as lawmakers have received increase scrutiny from communities, businesses and general aviation and helicopter organizations expressing concerns over the issue. Representatives such as Congresswomen Jack Speier, Anna Eshoo, Angie Craig and Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Joe Neguse, and Stephen Lynch, who serves as chair of the House Quiet Skies Caucus, have all taken the lead on the issue with the introduction of bills focused on providing new methods to mitigate airport noise, prioritize health impacts of noise, and improve community engagement. Recent bills introduced are as followed:

- **Air Traffic Noise and Pollution Expert Consensus Act:** Addresses increasing community concerns about airplane noise and pollution by requiring the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to sponsor an Expert Consensus Report issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine on the health effects of airplanes flying over residential areas. Expert Consensus Reports produced by the National Academies examine scientific and technological issues of national importance.

- **Serious Noise Reduction Efforts Act (SNORE) Act:** Establishes a program at San Francisco International Airport (SFO) to noise insulate more than 200 homes per year in specific areas and provide financial support to the cities impacted by aircraft noise.
- **Southbound HUSSH and NIITE Help Households (SHHH) Act:** Supports formally initiating and continuing the standard processing of the proposed San Francisco International Airport (SFO) NIITE Departure Southbound Transition and the Oakland International Airport (OAK) HUSSH Departure Southbound Transition.
- **Low-frequency Energetic Acoustics and Vibrations Exasperate (LEAVE) Act:** As an airplane departs an airport, its takeoff generates significant amounts of ground-based low-frequency noise and vibration impacting residents in the vicinity. The bill would lead to the establishment of standards and remedies related to ground-based noise (GBN) at airports like Long Beach Airport. If enacted, the bill would permit a state to take action on GBN if said state has previously undertaken a study of GBN at an airport. The state would need to set a maximum for noise level and show proof of substantial negative impacts on the surrounding community.
- **Restore Everyone's Sleep Tonight (REST) Act:** Allows airports, at their option, to impose a curfew, under specified circumstances, at any time between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.
- **All Participating in Process Reaching Informed Solutions for Everyone (APPRISE) Act:** Ensures that community knowledge and input is represented in the FAA flight procedure design process. An aviation roundtable technical representative will be allowed to fully participate in the FAA procedure design process for procedures affecting their communities.
- **Fairness in Airspace Includes Residents (FAIR) Act:** Amends the FAA's prioritization of U.S. airspace use. Safety in managing U.S. airspace would remain the top priority, and secondary priorities would include noise and health impacts to residents and other environmental concern.
- **Responsive Employees Support Productive Educated Congressional Talk (RESPECT) Act:** Requires FAA staff to answer questions submitted in writing by Members of Congress relating to flight procedures or other data affecting their district within 90 days and requires the FAA staff to appear at a meeting or town hall with a Member of Congress with 30 days' notice.
- **Notified Officials to Inform Fully and Impel Educated Decisions (NOTIFIED) Act:** If a new or modified flight path is proposed through the FAA Procedure Based Navigation (PBN) process, the FAA would be required to notify City Councils, Boards of Supervisors, Members of Congress, and Aviation Roundtables within 5 miles of the flight path in question.
- **Aircraft Noise Reduction Act:** Provides the authority for small airports to set curfews and limit the number and types of aircraft that can operate at their facilities. It also would prohibit the FAA from withholding federal funds from airports that choose to regulate aircraft noise.

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

In addition to Congressional efforts, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been working to address aircraft noise. The FAA is replacing its radar-based air traffic control system with the

satellite-based navigation and tracking system called NextGen. As part of the NextGen effort, the FAA is establishing new approach and departure patterns at airports to implement precision navigation capabilities. The FAA refers to these procedures as Performance Based Navigation (PBN).

To implement PBN in complex airspace around major metropolitan areas, the FAA is conducting a number of projects under its “metroplex” program. In planning each metroplex airspace reconfiguration, the FAA prepares an environmental assessment allowing for input from communities that may be impacted with increased noise by proposed changes to flight patterns. Currently there are 11 metroplex projects in various stages of study and implementation. Current locations include, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, Charlotte, Atlanta, southern Florida, the Cleveland-Detroit region, the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Houston, Denver, Phoenix and Las Vegas.

### FAA Study

A new information collection proposal by the FAA seeks to address the problem of sleep disruption caused by aircraft noise in communities near airports. Numerous studies suggest that aircraft noise can be disruptive to sleep, which can have negative implications for health and well-being.

A recent notice and request for comments indicates that the FAA plans to initiate a National Sleep Study to collect nationally representative information on the effects of aircraft noise on sleep. The study also would derive exposure-response relationships between aircraft noise and its effect on communities around U.S. civilian airports. This data will help the FAA determine if updates are needed to the national aviation noise policy.

### **Moving Forward**

All the aforementioned bills have been introduced before the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. However, there has been no movement on any of this legislation since their introduction. As previously stated, Congressional leadership introduced framework for transportation infrastructure priorities, which included \$30 Billion in funding for Airport Investments to accelerate research into noise reduction efforts in communities near airports. The likelihood of any legislative activity will most likely be incorporated into the Surface Transportation Reauthorization, which is set to expire September 30, 2020. In any case, TPA continues to follow up with members, in an effort to advocate for and be made aware of any legislative movement.