



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

June 19, 2012

Dear Mr. Huerta:

I am writing to seek clarification of recent airspace changes impacting noise exposure in south Minneapolis neighborhoods. Over the last nine months I have received an increased number of complaints of aviation noise from south Minneapolis neighborhoods that had not previously reported impacts.

It was initially thought that the increased noise was due to changes following an in-air, near-miss in 2010. After efforts by local FAA staff, it was determined that the changes were caused by a combination of the following:

- More flights leaving from runway 30R due to a 2010 change in departure procedures; and
- More Regional Jets, which now make up 54% of the fleet mix at MSP.

The result of these two changes is that planes are flying similar paths, and making earlier turns with shorter intervals between flights. Aircraft are also flying at lower altitudes when they cross the airport boundary due to the earlier turns.

The City of Minneapolis has invested millions of dollars in south Minneapolis to mitigate homes under the flight paths outlined in the Part 150 planning process completed in 1987. However, planes are no longer flying exclusively over those mitigated homes, but instead over neighborhoods that have never experienced continuous and disruptive aviation noise impacts.

One potential fix for the problem would be for planes taking off from runway 30R to be instructed by the control tower to wait to turn north until the middle mile-marker, which is at Cedar Avenue in south Minneapolis. This flight path would put the planes back over mitigated areas while also achieving a higher altitude before going over unmitigated areas.

Please clarify whether or not the FAA has the authority to tell pilots where to turn, and whether this option is being considered for MSP.

I understand the FAA is first and foremost tasked with creating a safe and efficient air traffic

system in the U.S. and I fully support that goal. However, local communities have a right to have their concerns addressed when changes to air traffic directly impact their daily lives.

I look forward to hearing from you and continuing to work with you and your agency.

Sincerely,



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

CC: Carl Rydeen, FAA Minnesota Operations
Margaret Gilligan - Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety
Christa Fornarotto - Associate Administrator for Airports