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Villamay Community
Association

Press Release

Alexandria Residents Applaud Congressman Beyer's Decision to Join Quiet Skies Caucus

Villamay and other community associations vow to keep up the pressure

Alexandria, VA, April 21, 2016: After corresponding with the Villamay Air Traffic Noise Abatement Campaign (VATNAC), Congressman Don Beyer has committed to joining the U.S. House of Representatives [Quiet Skies Caucus](#). The Caucus's specific legislative goals are outlined in its [Position Paper](#). In sum, the Caucus supports:

1. Mandate a robust community engagement process,
2. Require FAA to use supplemental metrics,
3. Clarify that airport operators are legally allowed to implement noise mitigation options,
4. Reform Section 213(c)(2) of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 that provides categorical exclusion from adequate environmental reviews for flight path changes implemented through the NextGen process; and,
5. Mandate independent research on the health impacts of aviation noise.

Grace Meng, a representative from New York's 6th District and a leader of the Quiet Skies Caucus, introduced [H.R. 3384](#) in July 2015 in direct response to the implementation of the FAA's NextGen air traffic control system. NextGen created airplane superhighways over previously quiet neighborhoods. That bill has 24 cosponsors and is still in committee.

The Villamay Community Association believes the remedy to the problem of air traffic noise from Reagan National is to require South Flow traffic to fly at least ten nautical miles down the Potomac River before making their westbound turns. Currently, aircraft are directed to turn at the Wilson Bridge, five nautical miles from the north end of DCA's runway. Ten nautical miles is the distance that North Flow flights are required to stay on the river before they make their turns.

The Villamay Community Association is asking residents of South Flow neighborhoods to sign a "[Statement of Concern](#)." This statement has 175 signers after a very short time. Our goal is to motivate all appropriate political representatives to take up our cause and work with the government agency that controls the flight routing, the FAA, to solve this vexing problem.

For more information contact Steven Hantzis, 571-882-1660 or sjhantzis@gmail.com.

ATCH: VATNAC Press Release March 24, 2016, Statement of Concern, Air Traffic Noise Talking Points, NextGen: The National Story

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FAA's NextGen air traffic control system turns local neighborhoods into airplane superhighways

Villamay and other community associations fight back

Alexandria, VA, March 24, 2016: The Villamay Community Association is beginning a door-to-door signature drive for a "Statement of Concern" regarding the unacceptable level of air traffic noise generated by South Flow flights to and from Reagan National Airport. The 250-home neighborhood two miles south of Old Town Alexandria has experienced an increase in air traffic noise since the implementation of the Federal Aviation Administration's NextGen air traffic control system. The new nationwide system of flight routing was implemented without community comment.

"Our neighborhood used to experience occasional noise from jets departing DCA," said Susan Palmer. "Since they started NextGen, there are times that there are flights every minute, and we've measured noise levels at over 80 decibels. It's so loud that, if you are outdoors, people can't even talk to each other."

Another neighborhood resident, Carol Lyon, said, "There used to be a curfew on flights. Now, the planes begin as early as 5:15 a.m. and I have heard them as late as 1:15 a.m."

The Villamay Community Association believes the remedy to the problem is to require South Flow traffic to fly at least ten nautical miles down the Potomac River before making their westbound turns. Currently, aircraft are directed to turn at the Wilson Bridge, five nautical miles from the north end of DCA's runway. Ten nautical miles is the distance that North Flow flights are required to stay on the river before they make their turns.

Several residents in the community have reached out to their political representatives and the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority (MWAA) without success. The "Statement of Concern" is addressed to all appropriate political representatives and is aimed at the government agency that controls the flight routing, the FAA.

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ATCH: Statement of Concern, Air Traffic Noise Talking Points, NextGen: The National Story

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VILLAMAY AIR TRAFFIC NOISE ABATEMENT CAMPAIGN TALKING POINTS

- What is NextGen? The FAA NextGen (Next Generation) air traffic control system is a modernization of all of the FAA's air traffic control functions. At the heart of the problem for Villamay and other neighborhoods is the automation of departing and arriving flights and the re-routing of traffic. NextGen is similar to a robotic assembly line that sends airplanes along one conveyor belt, traveling over the same neighborhoods over and over, often at low altitudes and sometimes at a rate of one airplane per minute for hours on end. The system may move more product (aircraft), but it fails to account for the human cost.
- The FAA implemented NextGen in May 2015 without community comment. Many communities across the country are beginning to fight back. Increased air traffic noise is a national problem.
- Northbound flights stay over the Potomac River for ten nautical miles and southbound flights only five nautical miles. We request that the southbound planes follow the river for at least ten nautical miles.
- Routine violation of curfew between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Flights run as late as 1:00 a.m. and begin around 5:15 a.m.
- NextGen flight patterns allow more aircraft and larger planes, creating more noise pollution.
- No environmental study was conducted to determine what impact the jet fuel particulates have in affected neighborhoods.
- Decibel levels for individual flights often exceed 80dB. However, the FAA and MWAA use a weighted average decibel measurement, dBA, over a 24-hour period to claim that levels are much lower.
- Individual neighbors doing Congressional outreach has been ineffectual, thus far.
- Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority (MWAA) has a "working group" on noise, and we have two representatives from Mason Hill. Thus far, there has been little response from MWAA or the FAA.

NEXTGEN: THE NATIONAL STORY

Alexandria, VA's fight joins a national chorus of communities battling NextGen

Neighborhoods between Old Town, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon aren't the only ones being affected by Next Gen. Once quiet neighborhoods around the nation are suddenly becoming noisy airplane superhighways. While the FAA touts the efficiencies of the new system—designed to increase traffic flow into airports, thereby increasing airline profits—they have not acknowledged that NextGen will create intolerable increases in air traffic noise in many neighborhoods.

While the FAA has been willing to sit down to community meetings, there has been no action on their part and they have proposed no solutions to address noise concerns of affected communities.

As Villamay and Mason Hill in Alexandria campaign for quieter skies, citizens around the country are fighting the same battle against the FAA in their communities. Here are some links to the national story:

In Palo Alto, California

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-ca-california-noise-faa-html-20151117-htmlstory.html>

<http://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2016/03/08/anxious-about-plane-noise-palo-alto-eyes-seat-on-new-faa-committee>

In Phoenix, Arizona

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/todayinthesky/2015/06/01/phoenix-sues-faa-over-flight-path-changes/28329559/>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/faa-new-air-traffic-control-system-nextgen-causing-major-noise-pollution/>

<http://aireform.com/a-closer-look-at-how-faa-is-tone-deaf-on-nextgen-noise-impacts/>

In the Boston area

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/south/2015/12/04/sick-logan-plane-noise-residents-let-faa-hear/DaOLEonLslglVUqHQR76H/story.html>

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