

RUBEN GALLEGO
7TH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEES:
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
READINESS
NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
WATER, POWER, AND OCEANS
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

1218 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4065

DISTRICT OFFICE:
411 NORTH CENTRAL AVENUE
SUITE 150
PHOENIX, AZ 85004
(602) 256-0551

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0307

January 28, 2016

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

Dear Administrator Huerta:

As you know, in September 2014, the FAA implemented new flight paths at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX) that exposed residents of the greater Phoenix Metropolitan Area to acute levels of aircraft noise. These changes were made without appropriate consultations with members of the affected communities or with local elected officials and, since that time, the FAA has failed to take meaningful steps to address their concerns. Given this troubling record, we write to express our clear expectation that the FAA will fully and expeditiously comply with its obligations under the recently enacted omnibus spending legislation and work to mitigate the impact of these flight path changes on residents of the Phoenix region.

The FY 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act includes a critical provision specifying that, “The [FAA] Administrator shall complete and implement a plan which enhances community involvement techniques and proactively addresses concerns associated with performance based navigation projects.” One such project is the redesign of departure procedures at Sky Harbor, and we strongly urge your agency to meet this legal requirement and “proactively address” the noise-related concerns repeatedly raised by our constituents.

We also note that the Statement of Managers accompanying the legislation states that, “A variety of amendments were offered in both chambers related to FAA air traffic procedures and, in particular, the noise that those procedures create in neighborhood communities. FAA must take a more proactive role in engaging communities that are impacted by these new departure and arrival procedures, especially when the agency chooses to utilize a categorical exclusion as part of the environmental review process.” The new procedures at Sky Harbor were implemented through the use of a categorical exclusion and—per the directive contained in the report and as mandated by the Act—we expect that the FAA will actively seek input from the airport authority and local residents as it works to address the issues resulting from the September 2014 flight path changes.

Unfortunately, the FAA’s record to date does not give us confidence that your agency will comply with these obligations. The statement accompanying the FY 2015 Consolidated

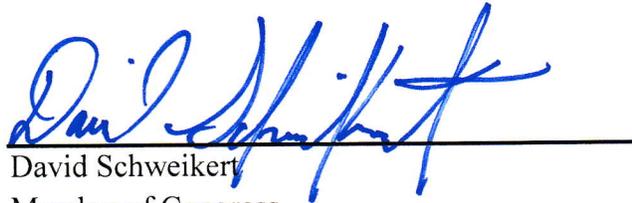
Appropriations Act similarly directed the FAA to report to Congress within 90 days on efforts to “identify appropriate mitigation measures” to address aviation noise concerns in the Phoenix area. Your agency disregarded this mandate and the required report was never submitted.

We have become increasingly frustrated by the FAA’s unresponsiveness to concerns raised by members of our communities. Again, in light of clear direction from Congress, we expect that the FAA will finally take action to mitigate the impact of unacceptable levels of aircraft noise on the Arizonans we represent.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



David Schweikert
Member of Congress



Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress