

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2007

The Honorable Marion Blakey
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Blakey,

We are writing to express our strong concerns about the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) proposed redesign of the New York/New Jersey/Philadelphia region airspace. Today's announcement indicates your agency's direction on this proposal, which will force scores of New Jerseyans—who already must live with unacceptable levels of noise—to have their lives interrupted and further burdened with the nuisance of having more noise from aircraft flying over their homes and businesses.

FAA's decision provides no indication that the Bush Administration gave any consideration to a practical alternative that incorporates both operational benefits and effective air noise reduction as primary design elements. The New York Times reported in February that Steven Kelly, FAA's project manager for the redesign, focused only on safety and efficiency during this process, and that noise concerns were "at best, a side issue." The nuisance of aircraft noise is anything but a side issue for many of our constituents. In our opinion, the FAA's decision to shut them out of the process, and to relegate their noise concerns to secondary or tertiary importance, has produced a flawed redesign proposal.

If your proposal is adopted, some 300,000 New Jerseyans will experience elevated noise levels, including residents in northern Bergen County, Gloucester County, Essex County, and Union County. Furthermore, FAA is only planning on holding one public hearing in New Jersey about its decision. Failure to hold separate public hearings in these locations prevents many of our constituents who would be affected by your proposal from voicing their opinions on this matter and truly inhibits the possibility of constructive public input on FAA's decision.

Your proposal will impact severely the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans, and reduce property values for many in our State. We believe that it may not be possible to adequately mitigate the environmental noise effects of FAA's proposed design, and that the design proposal itself must be reevaluated with aircraft noise

reduction as a major design element. Until then, we will continue to have grave reservations about this plan.

Sincerely,


Frank R. Lautenberg


Robert Menendez