

Report on Airport and Helicopter Noise and New Developments of Interest – submitted by the Transportation Subcommittee on Airport Noise, Joe Pelton, Chair

Helicopter Noise: The Eastern Region Helicopter Council (ERHC) in cooperation with the Helicopter Association International have agreed to put into place a new helicopter noise complaint system on a two-month trial basis. It is critical to the continuation of this reporting system for there to be wide-spread citizen response. It is now possible to provide detailed complaints as to the time, location, and other aspects of the complaint. These complaints can be registered either by phone: 1 877 209 3200 or on-line at planenoise.com/dcmetro. The on-line system involves filling out a simple and easy to use form that creates a record. Active use of this system by Arlington citizens and neighborhoods is thus critical to future action in this area. Further details about how this system came to be at the urging by local officials and U.S. Congress representatives can be found at: <https://www.arlnow.com/press-releases/beyer-regional-officials-unveil-new-helicopter-noise-complaint-system/>

Airport Noise nationwide and at DCA: The formation of the Arlington County Quiet Skies Coalition of Arlington Citizens (ACQSC) with a membership drawn from 16 Arlington County Civic Federation member organizations and delegates is now working in this area of our local concern regarding DCA. It is working to address all areas of airport noise and overflights of Arlington neighborhoods. Members of a newly formed CivFed Transportation Sub-Committee are active with this Coalition, but the ACQSC has also filed with the FAA on their survey of general noise standards nationwide. In that capacity, we are not seeking to speak on behalf of the ACCF. We will, of course, keep the Federation informed of our actions. In responding to the FAA request for comment with regard to noise monitors as a general matter, we are also keeping a focus on the FAA's review of our proposed near term noise remediation at DCA. **(Federal Register, Docket No. FAA-2023-0855)**

ACQSC official filing on the issue of Airport Noise monitors is summarized below:

1. Aircraft noise policy needs to define significant (unacceptable) noise in terms of a percentage of the population to be protected from exposure to highly annoying aircraft noise (the %HA goal); establish a system of metrics that accurately predicts how much aircraft noise is likely to be highly annoying and detrimental to health; establish default thresholds for acceptable noise for each metric consistent with the %HA goal; and allow local communities to tailor thresholds for each airport.
2. Local communities should be involved in decision-making for those airport operations which have a direct impact on their respective communities. This includes aircraft noise levels, flight frequency, and time of operations (i.e., nighttime versus daytime operations).
3. The DBL 65 metric which is currently used as a basis for FAA evaluation of noise impacts has been shown through myriad studies to be deeply flawed and not particularly relevant to the perceptions of noise in residential areas nor the negative health impacts

of that noise on residents. In addition, the FAA's Neighborhood Environmental Survey (January 2021) presented new data to update the Schultz curve that indicates that the DNL level should be adjusted to <50.

4. It is unlikely that a single metric will suffice for noise policy or that a universal dose-response curve will be broadly applicable. The system of metrics and thresholds should include the N above metric, for various noise levels (50, 55, 60, 65 and 70 dB) and time periods (per month, per day and per hour) in order to assess, describe and prevent noise during nighttime hours and peak time periods that is likely to be highly annoying and detrimental to health.
5. Aircraft noise is currently evaluated using manufacturers specifications to model estimated noise levels. The FAA noise policy should be revised to allow airports to use noise monitoring systems to evaluate the level of aircraft noise.

For more information about either of the above issues, please contact: Joe Pelton Transportation Subcommittee Chair at airport.noise@civfed.org