

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 31, 2017

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

Dear Administrator Huerta:

We write regarding a provision included in the fiscal year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that requires the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to review flight-path changes and take the necessary steps to mitigate the negative effects of these changes on local communities.

As you are aware, the flight-path changes implemented at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport in 2014 affected a significant number of residents and businesses near the airport. The changes in flight patterns caused an increase in the frequency of overhead flights, ultimately leading to an escalation in flight noise. Many of our constituents who live and work near Sky Harbor airport were understandably frustrated with the FAA's lack of engagement with the community prior to the implementation of these changes.

As a result, a provision was included in the NDAA to ensure the FAA consults with airport operators and affected communities before implementing any future flight changes. In addition, the law requires the FAA Administrator to review flight pattern changes made after February 14, 2012 to determine if the changes had a significant effect on the human environment. Should the Administrator make this determination, the FAA is then required to consult with the airport to identify measures to mitigate these effects.

It is important the FAA follow the instruction in the NDAA and work to improve community outreach and participation in flight-path changes. To get a better understanding of the FAA's work to implement this law, we would appreciate a timely response to the following questions:

1. What processes or procedures has the FAA implemented in order to facilitate community engagement and input before future flight-path changes are made?
2. Has the FAA initiated a review of previous flight-path changes as instructed by the NDAA?
3. If so, did the FAA review the flight path changes that took place at Phoenix Sky Harbor and what determination was made?
4. If not, what is the FAA's anticipated timeline for carrying out these reviews?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We ask that this matter be handled in strict accordance with all agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines.

Sincerely,



JEFF FLAKE
United States Senator



JOHN McCAIN
United States Senator