

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 20, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We, members of the Quiet Skies Caucus, write to request that you direct the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to add five community representatives to the NextGen Advisory Committee (NAC) as part of the June 2022 NAC charter renewal.

The mission of the NAC is to provide independent advice and recommendations to the FAA relating to operations that affect the future of the Air Traffic Management System.¹ The 30 members of the NAC represent multiple airline operators, aircraft manufacturers, industry associations and government agencies such as the Department of Defense and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.² Only one member represents environmental stakeholders. None of the members represent communities that live under NextGen corridors and that are directly impacted by the recommendations of the NAC. To better fulfill NAC's mission, we recommend adding five more seats to the committee, to be filed by representatives who can speak on behalf of affected communities.

There is precedent for the FAA expanding membership on an advisory committee. For example, the Advanced Aviation Advisory Committee, formerly known as the Drone Advisory Committee, recently expanded its membership from 35 to 41 members as part of its charter amendment.³ This was done in part to include “a community advocate representative to provide insight and expertise on potential impacts of increased drone traffic on communities.”⁴

Hearing directly from affected communities is essential. The NAC and the FAA rely on the use of the Day-Night average sound level (DNL) standard to assess the impact of their recommendations on communities. However, a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) study found that because the DNL combines into a single metric “both the amount of

¹ “NextGen Advisory Committee,” Federal Aviation Administration (last updated Dec. 27, 2021)
https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ang/nac

² NextGen Advisory Committee, “Membership List,” Federal Aviation Administration (Feb. 22, 2021)
https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ang/NAC_Membership.pdf

³ “Advanced Aviation Advisory Committee,” Federal Aviation Administration (last updated Feb. 25, 2022)
[https://www.faa.gov/uas/programs_partnerships/advanced_aviation_advisory_committee/#:~:text=The%20charter%20amendment%20\(%20PDF%20\)%20modified,members%20with%20an%20AAM%20background.](https://www.faa.gov/uas/programs_partnerships/advanced_aviation_advisory_committee/#:~:text=The%20charter%20amendment%20(%20PDF%20)%20modified,members%20with%20an%20AAM%20background.)

⁴ *Id.*

noise from each aircraft operation, as well as the average annual flights per day at a given location, the same DNL may be associated with vastly different numbers of flights above that location.”⁵ The GAO concluded that the DNL standard does not fully convey the noise created by flights overhead.⁶ Having community representatives on the NAC would enable the committee to better assess the on-the-ground impact of their recommendations.

We request a written response by May 4, 2022. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress
Quiet Skies Caucus Chair



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress
Quiet Skies Caucus Chair



Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress
Quiet Skies Caucus Co-Chair



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress
Quiet Skies Caucus Co-Chair



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

⁵ “Aircraft Noise: FAA Could Improve Outreach through Enhanced Noise Metrics, Communication, and Support to Communities,” United States Government Accountability Office (Sept. 2021) <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-103933.pdf>

⁶ *Id.* at 37.



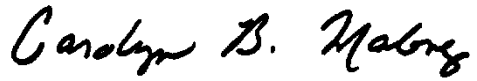
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



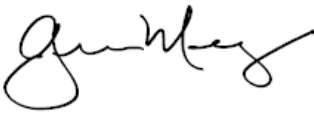
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Henry "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



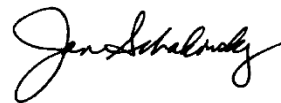
Joe Neguse
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Jimmy Panetta
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Jamie Raskin
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Jan Schakowsky
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Brad Sherman
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Adam Smith
Member of Congress