

## **Supporting Statement A**

### **FAA Aircraft Noise Complaint and Inquiry System (Noise Portal)**

#### **1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.**

In 2016 the FAA received over 35,000 aircraft noise complaints and inquiries from the public. Currently, there is no clear FAA process or regional point of entry for the public to submit noise complaints or inquiries. As a result, public noise complaints and inquiries get forwarded within the FAA until the appropriate person or organization receives and responds to it. This results in delayed and inconsistent FAA responses to the public and is a distraction and time consuming for FAA employees who mistakenly receives these. The FAA Noise Portal provides: (1) a clear point of entry for the public to submit FAA related noise complaints and inquiries (2) instructions and specific web-based fields to ensure the public provides the necessary information for FAA to address their complaint or inquiry, and (3) an agency-wide tracking system that automates the process to improve efficiency and consistency.

There is no specific citation, statute or executive order that requires the “collection of information”; however, 49 U.S.C. § 106(q), establishes an Aircraft Noise Ombudsman in the FAA, with general duties and responsibilities that include serving as a liaison with the public on issues regarding aircraft noise. In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) 1976 Aviation Noise Abatement Policy states the following:

The federal government has the authority and responsibility to control aircraft noise by the regulation of source emissions, by flight operational procedures, and by management of the air traffic control system and navigable airspace in ways that minimize noise impact on residential areas, consistent with the highest standards of safety. The federal government also provides financial and technical assistance to airport proprietors for noise reduction planning and abatement activities and working with the private sector, conducts continuous research into noise abatement technology.

Some airports have noise abatement program offices and complaint systems in place for the public to submit noise complaints or inquiries associated with operations at that airport. The FAA does not want to duplicate these efforts and will provide links to the airport noise complaint systems on the FAA regional noise websites. The FAA regional aircraft noise websites will also contain information on roles and responsibilities on aircraft noise, who the public should contact on noise issues, links to FAA aircraft noise policies, frequently asked questions and answers, information on FAA related projects with noise impacts and a link to the FAA Noise Portal. In addition, the FAA will work through the Airport Council International – North America (ACI) per their invitation, to minimize duplication efforts with their airport sponsor members who currently receive and respond to airport related noise complaints or inquiries.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

The FAA Regional Administrators' Offices and the FAA Noise Ombudsman will use the information voluntarily submitted by the public in the FAA Noise Portal to prepare responses to their noise complaints or inquiries. The required FAA Noise Portal fields represent the minimum amount of information the FAA needs to address the public's noise complaint or question and includes: name, email, address or cross street and a description of the noise complaint or inquiry. It is important to know the person's name and email address to respond and track the complaint. The FAA will not respond to the same complaint from the same person more than once. The address or cross street is needed for the FAA to determine potential sources of the aircraft noise issues as most people complain about aircraft in the vicinity of their residence. The description is used to provide additional details for the FAA to better address the complaint or question.

The FAA will use the information to more efficiently and effectively address noise complaints / inquiries from the public. Currently, many different FAA employees receive noise complaints / inquiries from the public. This data collected will be centralized in the noise portal in order to efficiently process complaints / inquiries, reduce delays in responses and allow FAA Regional Administrator's Offices and the FAA Office of Environment and Energy to look for trends regarding the public's concerns or interests on aircraft noise.

The FAA Office of Environment and Energy (AEE) will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with FAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. AEE does not plan to disseminate the information, but may use it to support general summaries about FAA noise complaints and inquires when queried by public officials, excluding any b personal identification information. In addition, the FAA will use the information to identify common complaints or inquiries and to establish a site for commonly asked questions and answers to post to the FAA regional aircraft noise websites. The public (or interested parties) will be able to access the site to get responses to commonly asked questions regarding noise. The FAA may also use the data to identify trends regarding noise concerns, ensure consistency in responses, and identify similar complaints.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.**

The FAA Noise Portal is 100% automated, an electronic system with both external (public facing) and internal (agency access) components. It provides a more efficient means of receiving, processing and responding to noise complaints and inquiries for both the public and the FAA. There is no form involved; however, there are several required web-based fields that prompt the public to submit the information the FAA needs at a minimum to answer their question. See attached screen shot of the web based fields of the FAA Noise Portal. Members of the public will still have the option to send a letter or call the FAA regional offices to submit a noise complaint or inquiry as they do today. The FAA does not plan to make the results of the information collection from the Noise Portal available to the public over the internet.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

There is currently no agency-wide system in place to organize and centralize incoming noise complaints/inquiries and responses from the FAA. Thus, information is often duplicated, with the same complaint being sent to multiple offices. The FAA Noise Portal automated system is an attempt to eliminate duplication. The FAA Noise Portal automated system uses JIRA software that has already been used by the FAA for other projects and has been modified for noise complaints or inquiries.

As stated in our response to Question 2, some airports have noise abatement program offices and complaint systems in place for the public to submit noise complaints or inquiries associated with operations at that airport. The FAA does not want to duplicate these efforts and will provide links to the airport noise complaint systems on the FAA regional noise websites. There are certain noise complaints and questions that are specific to the FAA that the airport sponsors cannot answer. The FAA regional aircraft noise websites will also contain information on roles and responsibilities regarding aircraft noise, points of contact on noise issues, links to FAA aircraft noise policies, frequently asked questions and answers, information on FAA related projects with noise impacts and a link to the FAA Noise Portal. In addition, the FAA will work with the Airport Council International – North America (ACI) per their invitation, to minimize duplication of efforts with their airport sponsor members who currently receive and respond to airport related noise complaints or inquiries.

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

This collection will not involve small business or small entities.

**6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

The FAA Noise Portal is voluntary for the public to use, if the public wants to electronically submit a noise complaint or inquiry to the FAA. The FAA Noise Portal web-based fields prompt the public to submit a set of required and optional information for the FAA to better address their noise complaint or inquiry. They can also mail a letter or call the FAA Regional offices to submit a noise complaint or inquiry.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**

There are no special circumstances that would apply to this proposed collection of information.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice published on (11/02/2017) (82 FR 50932) solicited public comment for 60 days. See attached FAA Response to Public Comments Matrix (82 FR 50932) for a detailed summary of the 26 public comments FAA received and FAA's responses to those comments.

In summary, the FAA received comments from 21 individuals; two aviation organizations, Airlines for America (A4A) and the Airports International Council of North America (ACI-NA); the Port of Seattle, which has oversight and management of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac); and the cities of SeaTac, WA and College Park, GA. Several individuals complained about aircraft noise at specific airports, which was not applicable to the public notice. We noted this as N/A in the FAA comment response matrix for OMB and restated the purpose of the FAA Noise Portal. Other individuals commented that the FAA Noise Portal would be useless because it would not improve their current noise situation. Several commenters questioned what the FAA would do with the data we collected. In our response we explained that the FAA would use the data to identify common complaints or inquiries so we could post commonly asked questions and answers to the regional websites to inform those interested upfront without their having to submit a complaint or inquiry through the FAA Noise Portal. We said we may also use the data to identify trends in FAA related noise concerns. Implementation of the Noise Portal does not change the FAA's current policies

regarding noise. One commenter noted that the PRA requires the FAA to certify that the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the agency. The FAA responded that as a federal agency we must be responsive to the public by taking action on the aircraft noise complaints we already receive, which in many cases means directing them to the appropriate airport. Others were concerned that the FAA would duplicate efforts by the Airport Sponsors who already have noise complaint systems to receive and respond to public noise complaints for their airport.

The FAA is aware of the existing airport sponsor noise complaint systems and will provide their links on the regional noise websites for the public. In addition, FAA will coordinate with ACI-NA to assist us in our coordination efforts with the airport sponsors and with other relevant aviation stakeholders ACI-NA represents to minimize any duplication in efforts between the FAA and airport sponsors regarding aircraft noise complaints or inquiries. We did not receive any comments on the cost and hour burden of the Noise Portal.

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

There are no monetary considerations for this collection of information.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

The FAA Noise Portal protects privacy information using several methods. Operating system level encryption is employed to protect privacy information from unauthorized access by external systems or users attempting to access files directly. Role based access controls and unique user login protect the privacy information from unauthorized access from within the FAA Noise Portal application. FAA users that are authorized to access the data based on their justified need to participate in addressing the noise complaint or inquiry are granted access based on their assigned role and use SSL based encryption to ensure the communications between the users and the portal are protected.

The statement below will be included on the public site (Noise Portal) as a pop-up that the public must acknowledge prior to completing and submitting their noise complaint or inquiry to the FAA.

**Privacy Statement**

This notice is provided in accordance with the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a (e) (3), and concerns the information requested on this website. AUTHORITY: 44 U.S.C. 3101; 49 U.S.C. 106(t)(3). PRINCIPAL PURPOSE(S): This information will be used to investigate aircraft noise complaints and inquires. In some cases, these complaints

and inquiries may involve aviation safety violations. ROUTINE USE(S): This information may be shared with the Agencies within the Department of Transportation with areas of responsibility for issues being reported, or pursuant to the routine uses identified in the System of Records Notice DOT/FAA 845, Administrator's Correspondence Control and Hotline Information System. To see the routine uses go to:

<https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/privacy/privacy-act-system-records-notice>

<https://www.faa.gov/privacy/>

DISCLOSURE: Voluntary; failure to furnish the requested information may result in an inability to thoroughly consider your complaint or inquiry and may therefore limit our ability to respond.

The FAA does not provide any assurance of confidentiality.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

The FAA Noise Portal does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:**

The estimated burden of total public hours is 11,250 hours. This is based on the current estimate that approximately 45,000 people may voluntarily use the FAA Noise Portal and that it takes an average of 15 minutes to enter the information. The specific labor costs of this would be \$236,250 per year. The per year labor cost is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics, median wage for workers in the US in the fourth quarter of 2017, which was \$44,564 per year, for a 40 hour work week or \$21 per hour (E.g.  $11,250 \times \$21 = \$236,250$ ). This is a conservative estimate, because not all people who complain or inquire about aircraft noise work. In addition, many people that would use the FAA Noise Portal would likely have submitted a noise complaint or inquiry to the FAA absent the FAA Noise Portal as they do today. The Noise Portal will likely save time for these individuals by providing clear access and guidance on how to submit a noise complaint.

**13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.**

None.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

Based on the current budget for the development and maintenance of the system, the total cost to the Federal Government for the proposed FAA Noise Portal is \$250,000 for each of the first two years and an additional \$150,000 for the contract support a year after that point.

Based on FAA internal surveys conducted in 2014, FAA employees spent approximately 25,500 hours responding to aircraft noise complaints at labor costs of approximately 1.3 million dollars per year based on a \$100,000 per year average salary. Since FAA noise complaints have quadrupled since 2014, the labor costs in 2018 for FAA employees to receive and respond to noise complaints and inquiries “without” the FAA Noise Portal would be approximately 5 million dollars per year. This still assumes a \$100,000 per year average salary. Because the FAA Noise Portal is expected to improve efficiencies for FAA employees responding to noise complaints, and newly established FAA noise websites will direct the public to airport sponsor noise complaint systems when appropriate, the FAA estimates the labor costs within the FAA, will decrease by about 25% or by 1.25 million dollars to 3.75 million based on the 2018 5 million dollar estimate. **This will save rather than cost.**

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

This is a new collection; therefore, it is a program change.

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

The FAA does not plan to publish the results.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

We are not seeking such approval.

**18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement