

Aviation Noise and Emissions Symposium (ANE) 2025
Walter (Walt) Gillfillan Award
Darlene Yaplee

Thank you so much.

I am deeply honored to receive this Award, and I want to thank ANE, the awards committee, and my nominators—Marie-Jo Fremont, Justin Cook, and Amy McCoy—for this recognition.

If there's one thing everyone can appreciate—this speech will be brief, given my experience with 3-minute public comments.

Now, I know that with an audience like this, there may be several groans at my receiving this award—after all, we come from different stakeholder groups, often with opposing views and competing priorities. But that's exactly what this award stands for—bringing together diverse perspectives, tackling difficult but necessary conversations, and ensuring all stakeholders have a seat at the table.

And when I look out at this audience, I see the very community that Walt Gillfillan envisioned—one where airlines, airports, consultants, community advocates, government, researchers, and regulators convene.

This award is bigger than me.

It acknowledges the progress in fostering constructive dialogue among all stakeholders and recognizes the meaningful inclusion of community perspectives in aviation policy discussions.

It honors the collective voice of AICA's 90+ grassroots community groups, co-founded with Dr. Cindy Christiansen, and builds on the foundation of local advocacy, including Concerned Residents of Palo Alto, co-founded with Marie-Jo Fremont. Together, we speak as one in the national conversation on aviation impacts, transforming frustration into constructive action.

It recognizes the Quiet Skies Caucus, local governments, and additional dedicated contributors for their support and willingness to collaborate on advocacy initiatives. It also validates the progress made in fostering constructive engagement with the FAA, particularly through Don Scata's leadership on Noise Policy and our joint efforts. Together, we advanced the inclusion of community stakeholders in meaningful dialogue—exemplified by the joint FAA-AICA webinar and its co-presentation as a best practice at ANE—setting an important precedent for engagement.

My mother told me that if you aren't at the table, you are on the menu. That's why staying engaged and showing up for these conversations matters. Making progress in aviation noise and emissions is not easy, and we don't always agree on the path forward. But disagreement doesn't mean disengagement. These discussions are important, and I look forward to the work ahead.

Thank you again for this incredible honor!