

[The following article was originally published in *Airport Noise Report* newsletter on pages 177 and 180 in Volume 37, Number 44, December 19, 2025.]

Airport Noise Report



A weekly update on litigation, regulations, and technological developments

Volume 37, Number 44

December 19, 2025

Airspace Modernization

COMMUNITY COALITION TELLS CONGRESS ITS VOICE MUST BE AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

The Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA) urged the leaders of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee to include the voice of communities impacted by aviation operations among the stakeholders they listen to in modernizing the National Airspace System (NAS).

In a recent letter to Congress, AICA wrote, “Modernizing the NAS is essential for all, including the traveling public and communities impacted by aviation. Congress has already initiated the conversation, with the House Committee holding a March 4, 2025, hearing focused on safety, staffing, and modernization, and the Senate Committee convening a related hearing on May 14, 2025. The Senate leaders emphasized solutions that work across user groups and invited input to help shape the air traffic control system of the future.”

AICA said it “welcomes this inclusive intent and emphasizes that those residing under flight paths and near airports, whose lived experience reflects the real-world consequences of NAS decisions, provide essential context for modernization discussions. This perspective recognizes that ‘stakeholders’ include not only agencies and industry participants but also residents and regions directly influenced by aviation, whose lived experience offers critical insight into how the system actually performs.”

AICA, which represents more than 90 local and national organizations “advocating for bipartisan efforts to reduce noise and health impacts while ensuring safe management of the NAS,” told the leaders of the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over aviation that its core recommendation to them is the following:

“All stakeholders, including communities impacted by aviation operations share the goal of ensuring a safer, more resilient NAS that benefits all. AICA requests that Congress adopt policies, rules, regulations, and other actions to implement a modernized, proactive NAS framework defined by the three critical themes below. This links FAA staffing levels, aircraft types, operations volume, and airspace complexity to objective, predefined thresholds that make risk visible, trigger timely adjustments, and document who was notified, what actions were taken, and the basis for those

actions. This framework should also leverage existing FAA data systems, accommodate emerging low-altitude aircraft that will add operational volume and complexity, and explicitly acknowledge that airspace capacity is finite and must be managed proactively.”

Three Critical Themes

- Safety improvements should be preventive rather than reactive, guided by objective data before disruptions or accidents reveal system weaknesses.
- Existing operational data must be used proactively to establish objective thresholds that make risk visible, guide timely adjustments, and ensure accountability.
- Airspace complexity is rapidly increasing as commercial, General Aviation (GA), and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM, including drones) operations converge within overlapping altitude bands, underscoring that airspace capacity is finite and must be actively managed as depicted in Figure 7 [on page 4 of the AICA letter]. Managing this complexity requires input from all affected stakeholders, including those living in aviation-impacted communities.

The AICA letter is attached to the email that brought you this issue of ANR.