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# ***Airport Noise Report***



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## ***FAA Noise Portal***

### **NOISE COMPLAINT DATA MUST BE USED AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL, COMMUNITIES TELL FAA**

*[Following is an excerpt from the comments the Aviation Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA) in response to FAA's request for public input on its Aircraft Noise Complaint and Inquiry System (ANCIR) or Noise Portal.]*

As the FAA undertakes its Noise Policy Review and evaluates how aviation noise metrics and engagement practices should evolve, the analytical use of community-derived information, including data collected through the ANCIR Portal, has become increasingly consequential.

#### **What's the Point of the FAA Noise Portal?**

In its current form, the ANCIR Portal functions primarily as a centralized complaint intake and reporting mechanism rather than as an analytical tool that informs operational review, mitigation discussions, or aviation noise policy evaluation. Absent analysis of ANCIR data linked to operational and noise exposure conditions and transparently reported to the public, the FAA cannot substantiate claims that the portal informs operational decisions, mitigation, or noise policy or that it functions as a meaningful community engagement mechanism. Analysis of the ANCIR Portal identifies three systemic gaps in the design and operation of the system.

- **The portal does not function as a meaningful community engagement mechanism as characterized by the FAA**

FAA materials describe the ANCIR Portal as a tool that “streamlines the process, allowing us to provide a comprehensive and timely response to each submission,” with a commitment that “extends beyond merely acknowledging complaints” and is intended to “foster transparency and understanding.” In practice, the portal functions primarily as a complaint intake mechanism. Responses to complainants are largely informational, providing general explanations of aviation operations or existing policies rather than

examining the reported aircraft activity. The FAA states that the ANCIR Portal allows members of the public to submit “questions, comments, or concerns,” yet the submission form does not provide a mechanism to ask questions or engage in dialogue. FAA responses often refer complainants to airport operators or other resources and do not explain how concerns are evaluated or what actions may result. As a result, ANCIR response communications do not provide situation-specific information on relevant FAA authorities, how concerns are evaluated, or how such information may inform operational review, coordination with airport operators and air traffic control, or broader policy evaluation.

- **Complaint information collected through the portal is not analyzed in its operational or noise exposure context.**

FAA reporting on the ANCIR Portal primarily summarizes statistics about complaint submissions. However, the reporting does not analyze complaints in relation to the aviation operational conditions affecting the complainant’s location, such as DNL contour placement or N-Above noise event exposure. FAA documentation describes how repeat submissions may be categorized or consolidated for reporting purposes but does not explain how they are evaluated as indicators of recurring aircraft operations affecting specific locations or communities. The U.S. Government Accountability Office has observed that aviation noise complaints frequently become concentrated among a smaller number of affected residents, reflecting repeated noise exposure at specific locations rather than isolated events.

- **The portal is an underutilized source of community evidence for aviation noise analysis and action.**

The FAA states that ANCIR data are used to identify “trends, patterns, and potential areas of concern” and to “explore avenues to address them.” However, the FAA does not demonstrate how ANCIR data are used to inform operational responses, noise mitigation actions, or aviation noise policy evaluation. This includes the FAA Noise Policy Review of whether DNL remains the appropriate metric.

Without demonstrated analytical use and public reporting of results, ANCIR data do not function as a source of evidence for decision-making. Only where ANCIR data are analyzed in relation to operational conditions and noise exposure, and transparently reported through ANCIR outputs, can the FAA reasonably state that such data inform operational review, mitigation, or aviation noise policy evaluation or that the portal functions as a meaningful community engagement mechanism. Absent such analysis and public reporting, such statements are not supported.

This assessment is corroborated by a survey of AICA member organizations in which 81 percent of respondents indicated that the FAA Noise Portal does not improve community engagement.

These limitations are particularly significant in the context of the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024*, including the Noise Policy Review (Sec. 187), the Aviation Noise Advisory Committee (Sec. 792), and community engagement objectives (Sec. 793), all of which should benefit from analysis of community-derived information. In its

current form, the ANCIR Portal does not support these efforts, as complaint information is not analyzed in a way that can inform these processes.

**The following targeted improvements address identified gaps and support meaningful community engagement:**

- Reform ANCIR Portal responses to provide meaningful operational and noise exposure context and evaluate reported concerns, and identify the actions the FAA can or will take in response.
- Modify the ANCIR Portal complaint structure so that repeated submissions are evaluated as indicators of recurring aircraft noise exposure affecting specific locations, rather than being consolidated primarily for reporting purposes.
- Integrate airport-level complaint data with ANCIR reporting and revise FAA restrictions on third-party submissions to allow complaint data to be evaluated in relation to airport operations.
- Connect ANCIR complaint locations to DNL contours and N-Above exposure characterization in summary reporting to better understand how reported concerns correspond to actual noise exposure conditions and current policy metrics and thresholds.
- Conduct a systematic survey of ANCIR Portal users to evaluate engagement effectiveness and identify improvements to the complaint and response process.
- Expand ANCIR summary reporting to include analysis that evaluates complaint patterns in coordination with airport operators and air traffic control, rather than reporting only statistics describing complaint submissions, including analysis linked to operational conditions and noise exposure and the public reporting of those results through ANCIR outputs.
- Ensure ANCIR complaint data, once analyzed under the improvements described above, are incorporated into current and future aviation noise policy evaluation processes and public reporting on aviation noise impacts.
- Ensure ANCIR complaint data, once analyzed under the improvements described above, are used to inform the FAA Noise Policy Review.

Many of these recommendations can be implemented through refinements to existing response protocols, reporting practices, and the integration of operational and noise modeling datasets already maintained by the FAA. By enhancing the analytical use of ANCIR data, public confidence would be strengthened by demonstrating that community-reported information meaningfully contributes to FAA operational insight, aviation noise policy evaluation, and advisory processes.

[Some 1,233 comments were submitted to FAA's docket on its Noise Portal but only 50 of those comments are available to read. Almost all comments, which were mostly from individuals, endorsed the AICA's comments. If any comments were submitted by airport, airlines, or others representing aviation interests, they were not posted on the FAA's comment docket.]

To view the comments available on FAA's Noise Portal, go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) and search for "FAA-2026-0661".

AICA's full comments are attached to the email that brought you today's issue of ANR.