

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2016

The Honorable Michael P. Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

We write regarding upcoming court-ordered/sanctioned mediation between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the City of Phoenix and community representatives to address the noise problems that have resulted from flight-path changes implemented at Sky Harbor in September 2014.

We appreciate your attention to the concerns of our constituents associated with the FAA's adjustment of these paths, and your acknowledgement that "[d]espite the litigation filed by the city and by Phoenix neighborhood groups, consistent with Congress' intent, [the FAA remains] willing to work together to develop additional potential adjustments to the procedures." The upcoming mediation represents one approach to resolving this matter, and, in connection with this mediation, we urge you to use the tools and authority available to the FAA to reach a workable solution for the community around Sky Harbor and the FAA, as appropriate and consistent with existing rules, regulations and ethical guidelines.

As you are aware, there has been substantial work by our offices to address process concerns related to the lack of engagement with local stakeholders before making flight-path changes as part of the FAA's implementation of the Next Generation Air Transportation (NextGen) System. This has resulted in legislation, included in FAA reauthorization bills in the House and Senate, to create a process for the FAA to take steps to mitigate the negative effects of these flight-path changes, and also ensure that other airports and communities have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the FAA before any future changes are made. Along with ongoing engagement with your agency, we will continue to work to have this, or any additional legislation warranted under current circumstances, enacted into law, until this issue is finally resolved.

We look forward to continuing to work together to address this matter and advance the safety and efficiency of our nation's airspace through NextGen and ask that you update us on the progress you are able to achieve in the upcoming mediations, as appropriate.

Sincerely,


John McCain
United States Senator


Jeff Flake
United States Senator