

HB310, Study on the Health Effects of Air Traffic Noise
House Appropriations Committee
PAUL VERCHINSKI
5475 Sleeping Dog Lane
Columbia, MD
DC Metroplex BWI Roundtable Member (Alternate) (RT)
Howard County Citizens Association, Board member
Oakland Mills Community Association, Board member (Columbia)
Position: FAVORABLE

I have been a member of the RT for the past three years as Senator Guy Guzzone's representative for his district. I have heard from many citizens that have been negatively impacted by the so called NextGen reassignment of airplane departures and arrivals that transit the airspace in what everyone now calls a Super Airplane Interstate Highway in the sky. (Both horizontally and vertically, airplanes follow the same computer generated pathway in the sky 33 yards wide). Unlike highways where sound walls can be built to shield citizens impacted by excessive noise, nothing like that can be built in the sky. Airplane noise now occurs 24/7 and wakes citizens from sleep at 3 AM and/or can not fall asleep. Not getting sound sleep is a known risk factor for heart attacks, strokes, etc.

I have some expertise with models when I formerly worked for the Federal Transit Administration as a transportation planner and what I have found is that both the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) use simulation models of noise emanating from airplanes. None of these models are validated which means that none use actual noise monitors to make sure that the simulation models are accurate and reflect reality – the whole purpose of models. This approach violates what one learns in Modeling 101. In fact, the MAA has received funding to place noise monitors around and along the NextGen arrival and departure paths but has failed to do so. In discussions with the FAA environmental planner at an FAA presentation, even if actual noise information was made available by an airport, the FAA would not use it because there are varying qualities of monitors. (The FAA could require all airports to use the same type of noise monitor to validate actual noise inputs, but chooses not to do so. This allows both the MAA and the FAA not to be challenged on noise issues experienced by citizens and communities as a result of the NextGen flight paths).

Currently, BWI is expected to expand exponentially over time with corresponding exponential growth of airplane arrivals and departures AND NOISE. Amazon, with Maryland state financing, is building a BWI mid-field cargo terminal with 93 tractor trailer bays.

Section 1, (e) states that an appropriation to conduct this noise study will be included in the "fiscal year 2022 budget bill". I would suggest that funding for this sorely needed noise study be done earlier.

Please report out HB310 favorably.

