



Howard County Council

Deb Jung
Councilmember

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District 4

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HB 0204
Deb Jung
Howard County Council
FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Delegate Barnes, Vice Chair Delegate Chang, and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

Thank you to Delegates Hill, Bagnall, Chang, Feldmark, Grossman, Guzzone, Lehman, Ruth, Terrasa, and Ziegler for introducing this critical bill.

I am member of the Howard County Council and the County Council's representative to the BWI Roundtable. I am also a resident who lives under the superhighway in the sky created by the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) at the Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall (BWI-Marshall) airport.

For four-and-a-half years as a Councilmember, I have heard from residents about the noise and environmental pollution caused by constant airplane traffic. Prior to NextGen, the older radar-based navigation system allowed for the dispersion of flight paths and less concentrated noise on communities. NextGen enables a superhighway of plane traffic flying over our heads 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. This superhighway impacts communities as far as 15 miles from the airport and was thrust upon neighborhoods that had never experience plane noise.

We now know that there are significant health consequences to living under the NextGen flight paths. Just a few months ago, Dr. Zafar Zafari and Jeong-eun Park at the University of Maryland's School of Pharmacy released their state-funded report titled "Projecting the Health and Economic Burden of Aircraft Noise." The report focused on the health impacts of concentrated flight paths at BWI-Marshall airport since the implementation of NextGen in 2015. The report determined that the controversial flight paths at BWI-Marshall airport have negative health effects that will, on average, cost Marylanders in excess of \$40 million per year in health care costs over the next 30 years.

The results of this state-funded study indicate that the projected economic advantages to the region from BWI-Marshall expansion and new flight paths are significantly offset by their negative health consequences, which were measured through quality-adjusted life years and medical economic burden on affected populations. The study states that the total cost of hospitalizations, as well as direct and indirect costs of disease and lessening of life outcomes, will be approximately \$1.2 billion spread out over 30 years, or \$800 million in today's dollars. The study concludes, "Therefore, public health measures to mitigate noise are warranted."

These health concerns and associated costs have not been a part of the conversation at the Maryland Aviation Commission, the State's only Commission created to address airport issues. This bill will allow members of the public to have a seat at the table so that all perspectives can be heard when discussing measures to expand the airport, create new flight paths, or build another runway. Public representation on this Commission will enable it to focus on the impacts that BWI-Marshall has on the residents underneath the flight paths, provide state legislators with the information they need to make necessary adjustments at BWI-Marshall, and find ways to interact with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). For too long technology and efficiency have superseded the health and well-being of hundreds of thousands of residents.

As noted in a Bicameral Letter from Congress to the FAA:

“We are concerned that the NextGen program has failed to meet the bare minimum standards for success. Currently, the FAA continues to introduce and implement concentrated flight procedures with Performance Based Navigation throughout the country. The FAA boasts profits for airlines, shipping companies, and other industry stakeholders, but the burden of noise, health risks, and declining property values falls on the backs of hard-working Americans.”

This bill will also modify the Maryland Aviation Commission to assess and mitigate the negative impacts of aviation traffic at BWI-Marshall and establish policies based on accepted scientific research on creating and maintaining healthy and livable communities. HB0204 will go a long way to balancing out the considerations reviewed by this Commission in the decision-making process and I urge all of you to support its passage.

Sincerely,



Deb Jung
Councilmember, District 4