

Allan H. Kittleman
3030 Kittleman Lane
West Friendship, MD 21794

SB 658 – Transportation – Maryland Aviation Infrastructure Impacts Commission

Senate Finance Committee

March 9, 2022

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee,

First, as a former member of the Senate Finance Committee, I want to thank you for your service to the state of Maryland, and for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 658. To that end, while aviation is a critical part of the Maryland economy, it must be managed in a way so that we can all benefit from it. The Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport in particular has served as an important economic engine to the region in recent years, but unfortunately it has come at a cost to its neighbors.

In 2016, the United States Federal Aviation Administration implemented an effort to change the paths of flights all across the country through a program called NextGen. Unfortunately, with the focus on streamlining flight paths and reducing the use of jet fuel, the FAA lost sight of those who lived below, particularly in the area surrounding BWI. To improve efficiency and predictability, NextGen navigates air traffic through a very narrow band during take off and landing, causing planes to fly over the same houses and neighborhoods over and over again. Prior to NextGen, planes flew higher and over a wider area, reducing and diffusing the noise impact.

Many folks have heard me say this, but it has never been more true than in this instance: “If you aren’t at the table, you’re on the menu.” The FAA put our residents on the menu when they left them out of the discussion. In my former role as Howard County Executive, I heard from many residents whose quality of life was dramatically altered by the incessant sound of planes taking off or landing, to which they had not been subjected before the implementation of NextGen. A common phrase I heard was “life changing”, and I believe this was not just hyperbole. As a result, I took action, trying to engage the FAA in a review of this program and even pursued legal options to help the community. Unfortunately, they have been unsuccessful to date and our residents have been left to suffer the consequences.

I appreciate those who have moved this legislation forward, as I believe our residents deserve a forum to understand the impacts of changes at our growing airports and communicate their perspectives with the appropriate decision makers. That is the only way we can continue to improve and prevent the unintended consequences of NextGen from ever happening again.

It is for these reasons that I support this legislation, and **I respectfully request a favorable report.**

Sincerely,

Allan H. Kittleman