

03/09/2022

Dear Maryland Senate,

This testimony is to urge you to approve SB658 to establish a Maryland Aviation Infrastructure Impacts Commission. Unless you live directly under an FAA NextGen flight path, you may not understand the full impact of how these flights are destroying our lives and communities. So I ask that you please keep an open mind and listen to the facts that I will share with you today. Our family-including our newborn daughter, 3 year old son and 8 year old daughter-moved to Columbia, MD in 2018, and we have been emotionally and financially devastated by airplane noise ever since. We are 10 nautical miles from BWI and did not expect, nor were given any warning that there are as many as 150 overflights per day as loud as 80-90dB, because the MAA and FAA insist that our neighborhood is “not significantly impacted” by airplane noise. We could not afford the \$100,000+ sound mitigation that is needed on our home, so we did the best that we could- we filled my bedroom windows with rockwool and covered them with foil to keep the insulation from falling out. Even with draconian measures that block natural light and use of our windows for fresh air, we still have to wear noise blocking headphones and play brown noise with the same low frequency spectrum as the jets in order to get any sleep in our home. The MAA/FAA claiming that this noise is “no significant impact” to our community is the same as Flint Michigan telling you “the water is safe to drink”. Our neighborhood school, Stevens Forest Elementary, is about 80% minority students and has one of the highest numbers of students on free lunch. The performance was top 20% in Maryland when FAA started NextGen around 2014, and is now bottom 20% since 2020. Our homes are among the least valuable in Howard County, and some local realtors are now using the BWI noise disclosure so that they won't be sued for lack of disclosure on a sale.

Here is some more information that explains why we need a group funded and commissioned with powerful authority to do this work. The problem with NextGen is that the noise levels are averaged and are arbitrary, and they use class-A noise spectrum which cuts out much of the low frequency noise from the jets relative to other environmental noises. I have personally quantified the noise using full-spectrum class-C measurements and have collected evidence that the overall impact from jets is THREE TIMES the noise from a busy highway (US-29, 90,000 cars/day) that is 1,000 feet away (Figure 1). If someone wanted to build a 270,000 car/day highway next to your home, would you consider it “no significant impact”? The research literature demonstrates very clear jet noise impacts on childrens' performance in school, and I believe that over many years it will result in an epidemic of dementia and other diseases related to increased noise stress, lack of sleep, microbiome and circadian rhythm disruption and ultrafine particle pollution. The BWI flight path TERPZ is one of the worst in the country when it comes to number of flights and noise, needing IMMEDIATE action and not legislative hand waving and delays. Like most of my neighbors suffering from this noise dumping on our community, I don't have the time and ability to make enough of a difference to bring resolution to the current problems—but a Commission recognized by the State and given authority to fight for Maryland citizens, will be dedicated to this purpose and I know that it WILL make a difference.

Before I conclude, I will share one more piece of information that shows why we need a Commission that is specifically for the people of Maryland and not the big industrial interests who make billions from airport traffic. The MAA has put noise monitors in almost every community around the airport, except for our community on Stevens Forest Road. When I requested a portable noise monitor to see if the noise level reached the threshold of 65dB, the day that the monitoring started, jets began to slow down

over our home so that the noise was greatly reduced. I have semi-quantitative evidence of this change in flight patterns by MAA/FAA (Figure 2) showing the difference before monitoring and during monitoring. Even with this effort to reduce their noise when being monitored, the average noise was 64 dB, almost at the 65dB cutoff where noise insulation would be required in zoning- TEN MILES from BWI! We have tens of thousands of citizens living in residences, apartments, an elementary, middle and high school, and parks and community centers. The MAA has concentrated the jet traffic departing and arriving to BWI over our neighborhoods because they can dump this toxic noise on our families from low-flying jets while other communities with noise monitors are spared the impacts of their pollution. My friends three miles up the road don't even know that our lives are being ruined by non-stop jet noise- they just assume that our house is as quiet as theirs at night. We are not fighting an honest and transparent enemy- there is foul play at work and a Commission would have the ability to identify and investigate wrongdoing by those in government and industry who are operating in ways that are unethical and self-serving. If our Federal Congress will not fix this problem, Maryland needs to take it on at the state level to the fullest extent possible in order to protect Marylanders from harms being inflicted by government organizations such as FAA that are not responsible to the American public due to regulatory capture by the industries that they regulate.

In summary, we desperately need a Commission to look into noise impacts, forge solutions, and go after wrongdoers and unethical practices that betray Marylanders in our government and civil agencies. The noise is unbearably loud- it interrupts conversations, keeps us from going to sleep until after midnight, and wakes us up throughout the night and early in the morning around 4-5am every day. There is no rest- every time that we pull into our driveway, as soon as we open the car door we hear loud jet noise overhead. Getting away from home is our only relief. The current methods used to claim that there is "no significant impact" from the noise are outdated, debunked, and have been completely thrown out in other countries such as in Europe where they have much lower thresholds and especially at night, understanding that noise keeps people from sleeping and causes an epidemic of dementia and other diseases. The daytime noise is impacting our children's stress levels and their school performance. We need more than a Commission- we need justice! But let's start with a Commission if that is what it is going to take. And let's get rid of FAA NextGen's systemic discrimination and environmental injustice in Maryland. All Marylanders need to stand up together to protect families and children from the harm caused by FAA NextGen. No matter what your political position, please help to protect the quality of life and American Dream for Marylanders who are suffering from this toxic noise dumping by MAA, FAA and the airline industry. Vote YES for SB658 and give the commission as much funding and power as you can to fight for our communities. Thank you for your time. **(Figures 1-2 on next two pages).**

Sincerely,
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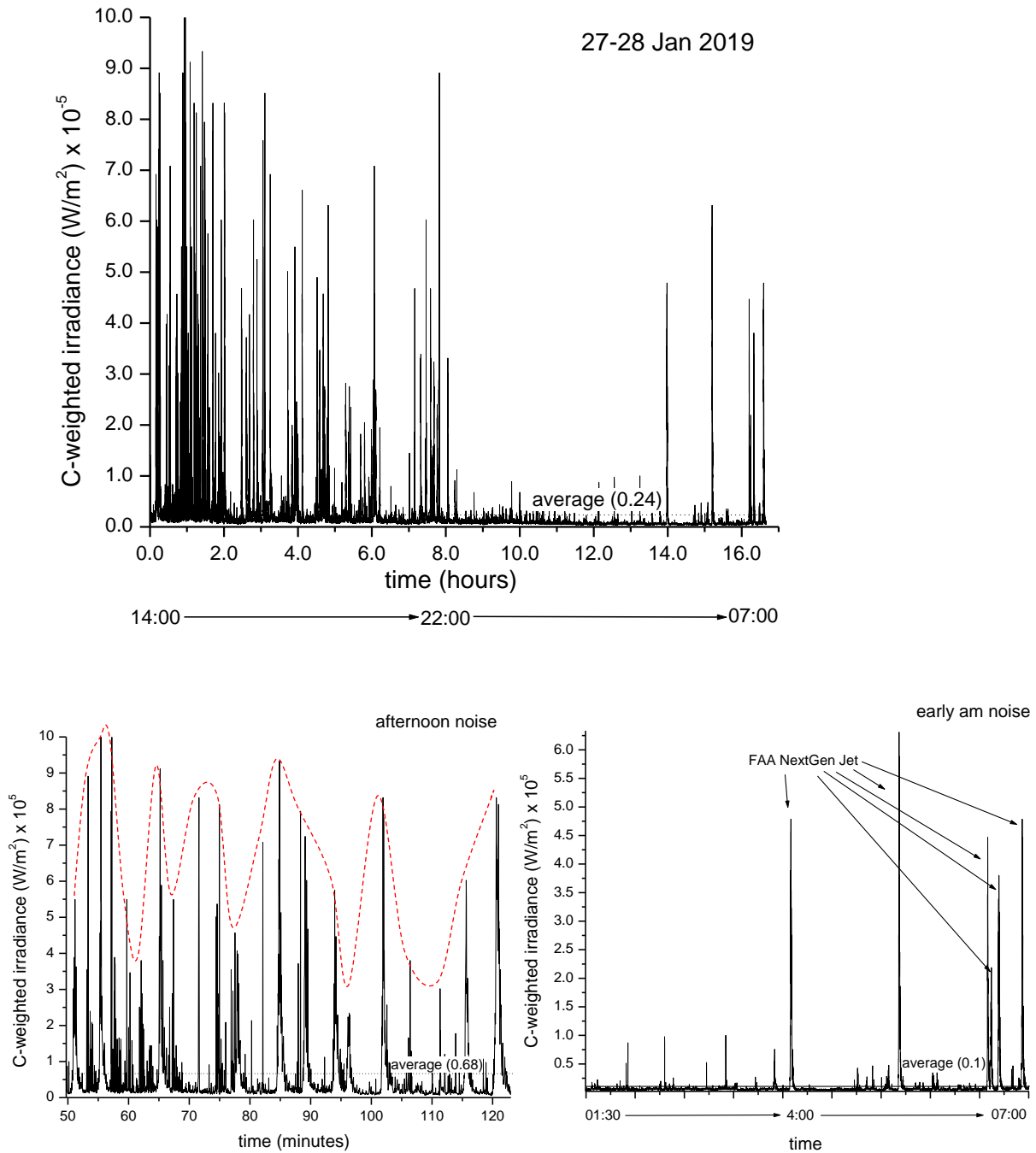


Figure 1. C-weighted outdoor noise data. A) Complete noise data from 27-28 Jan 2019 from 14:00 to 7:00 with average for that time period (black dotted line) and many jet noise events that are far above the average. B) Afternoon noise data from 50 minutes to 120 minutes showing background noise, average for that time period (black dotted line), and effective mental impact of noise based on trajectory from peak jet noise to peak jet noise (red dotted line). C) Early AM noise data showing that jet noise is now extremely out of proportion to any other background noise and the average (black dotted line).

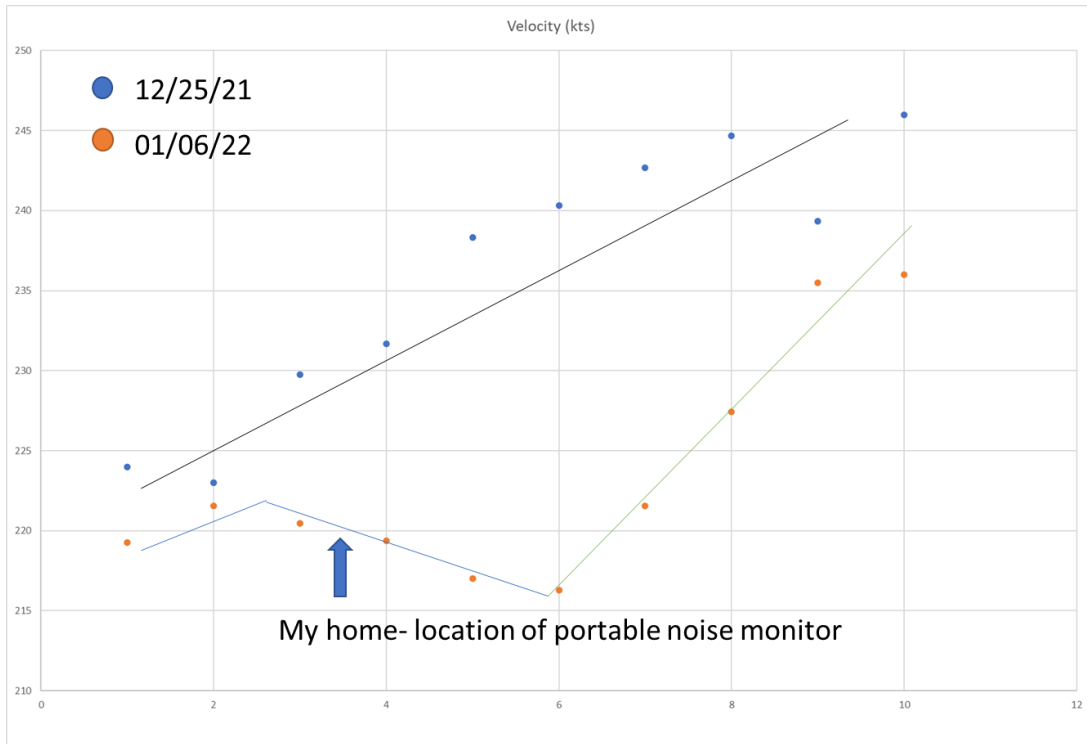


Figure 2. Evidence that MAA/FAA alter jet flight paths during a portable noise monitoring event so that evidence of excessive noise in our unmonitored community will not require changes to FAA routes or subsidies for noise insulation. Data obtained from FlightRadar24.