



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN OF MILTON

OFFICE OF SELECTMEN

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September 8, 2016

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VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

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Dear Ms. Corbett and Mr. Glynn:

On several occasions during the past couple of years, we have written to you to bring to your attention the very serious problem of increased airplane traffic, and the noise and pollution associated with it, over the Town of Milton. Various town officials, including members of this Board, have met with you and/or your colleagues to address this issue and request that changes be made. Last December, FAA and Massport representatives attended a meeting in Milton hosted by Congressman Stephen F. Lynch for communities affected by increased levels of airplane noise. At Congressman Lynch's meeting, FAA and Massport representatives heard from Milton residents who described extended periods of loud, constant noise over consecutive days as well as their concerns about health risks relating to noise and pollution from excessive air traffic.

Despite our numerous requests, your attendance at meetings, and the very substantial increase in the number of noise complaints that Milton residents have filed with Massport's Noise Abatement Office, the Town of Milton has yet to receive any relief from the FAA's gross overuse of Runways 4R/4L for arriving flights.¹ If anything, the situation seems only to have

¹ As you know, although arrivals to Runways 4R and 4L (particularly 4R) are not the sole cause of Milton's aircraft noise complaints, they are by far the major cause. Our letter dated July 19, 2016 to Ms. Corbett and Mr. Todd Friedenberg of the FAA outlined measures that can and should be taken by the FAA to alleviate the problems that Milton experiences because of the RNAV paths for departures from Runways 27 and 33L. In that letter, and when we met in person with Ms. Corbett and Mr. Friedenberg on June 17, 2016, we pointed out that Milton would have little to no air traffic associated with Runway 33L if departing planes would follow the prescribed RNAV path rather than turn southeast around the KIRAA waypoint (which is for Runway 27 departures). Departures from Runway 27

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gotten worse. Neither the FAA nor Massport has implemented any changes that would provide Milton with even short-term relief² from, let alone permanent solutions to, the problems created by the FAA's NextGen program.

On March 22, 2016, we wrote to inform you of a 91-hour period during the month of March during which the Town of Milton experienced virtually constant noise as a result of departures from Runway 27 (7 hours) and arrivals to Runways 4R and 4L (84 hours). Our letter reiterated that Milton receives a disproportionate share of air traffic while some communities that are as close to Logan Airport as Milton is receive very little air traffic. We asked for an equitable distribution of air traffic across the Greater Boston area³ and immediate relief to ensure that such a situation would not be repeated. Despite meetings that we and other Milton officials had with Mr. Glynn on May 12 and Ms. Corbett on June 17, nothing has changed.

Today we write to inform you that airplane noise over Milton this summer has been atrocious and has unduly burdened many residents of our Town. Noise is more than a nuisance. Noise is a public health concern, as is pollution from ultrafine particles emitted from airplanes, especially the low-flying arrivals that go over Milton. We wish to share with you a few of the most egregious examples of consecutive days of long hours of constant noise that the people we represent have experienced, often on otherwise beautiful summer weekends when people expect to be enjoying outdoor activities. Instead, they are closing windows and moving outdoor events indoors.

Equally troubling is the fact that, at times, the FAA directed arriving aircraft to Runways 4R and 4L when wind conditions did not support using these runways. Our understanding is that Runways 4R/L are to be used when the wind is from the northeast. However, too many times

place traffic over Milton for the sole purpose of avoiding suburban communities west of Boston, which is a very unjust result and should have been revisited long ago by the FAA. Residents of the western suburbs utilize Logan Airport as do those who live in Milton and other NextGen-affected communities. The western suburbs should share not only the convenience to an international airport but also the burdens associated with it. It is grossly unjust and against public policy for the FAA to overburden a handful of communities with loud airplane noise from low-flying planes.

² Please see our July 19, 2016 letter to Ms. Corbett and Mr. Friedenberg, which reiterated some short-term measures that we had discussed on June 17, 2016, such as ensuring that the Logan Tower has rolling 7-day runway use data, implementing continuous descent requirements for arriving flights, and ensuring that arrivals to Runway 4R turn south of the NABBO waypoint at an altitude of at least 3,000 feet.

³ Though imperfect, prior to the FAA's implementation of NextGen at Logan Airport, air traffic was distributed across many communities. The concentration of flight paths as a result of NextGen has dramatically increased air traffic over Milton. Moreover, airplanes are flying over Milton at lower altitudes than they previously did and are not adhering to altitude requirements at key waypoints like NABBO.

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this summer, Milton has experienced hours of loud, constant airplane noise when winds were out of the northwest, southeast or southwest or when conditions were calm.

Below are representative samples, certainly not an exhaustive list, of unacceptable periods of overuse of Runways 4R/L:

(a) From Tuesday, July 5, through Sunday, July 10, Runways 4R/L were used for 99.5 hours as follows:

- 15.5 hours on July 5
- 5 hours on July 6
- 19 hours on July 7
- 20 hours on July 8
- 20.5 hours on July 9
- 19.5 hours on July 10

During some of this time, winds were not from the northeast and, therefore, the FAA did not have to use Runways 4R/L. For example, on the evening of July 10 (day 6), conditions were calm and another runway could have been used a few hours before the FAA finally switched from the 4s to 27/33 at approximately 11:00 p.m. During this time period, it was unconscionable for the FAA not to have changed to another runway configuration, especially when wind direction permitted or required it, to afford even a minimal degree of relief to people who lost sleep and suffered health effects from four (4) days of constant airplane noise from as early as 5:00 a.m. until after midnight. At 8:30 a.m. on Monday, July 11, despite using Runways 4R/L for the preceding 6 days, the FAA again began directing arrivals to Runway 4R even though wind conditions did not require its use.

(b) For the four (4) day period from Friday, July 29, through Monday, August 1, Milton experienced approximately 19 hours of airplane noise from arrivals to Runway 4R each day, ruining a summer weekend for many residents. The noise continued into Tuesday, August 2. Please see the email correspondence between the Chair of the Milton Board of Selectmen and Mr. Friedenberg attached to this letter as Exhibit A.

(c) During the five (5) day period from Friday, August 19 through Tuesday, August 23, Milton had nearly sixty (60) hours of air traffic. Despite the fact that the winds were from the southeast for most of this time, the FAA directed arrivals to land on Runway 4R instead of Runway 15R. Please see the attached Exhibit B, which is a summary of runway usage from

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August 19 through August 23 prepared by the Chair of Milton's Airplane Noise Advisory Committee.

(d) During the 83-hour period from 5:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 27, through 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 30, arrivals to runway 4R flew over Milton for a total of 44 hours. If wind direction truly were the FAA's primary factor in determining which runway to use, the Logan Tower would have used Runway 4R for only 15 of those 44 hours as winds were from the northeast and east for only 15 hours during this period. For 16 of the 44 hours in question, winds were from northwest (270-350), for 12 hours, winds were from the southeast (120-170), and for the remaining 1 hour, conditions were calm.

(e) Labor Day weekend was another summer weekend ruined by constant airplane noise for many Milton residents. From Friday, September 2, through today, Thursday, September 8, Runways 4R/L were used for 135 hours⁴ (through 5:00 p.m. today and still counting) as follows:

- 19 hours on September 2
- 17 hours on September 3
- 19 hours on September 4
- 19 hours on September 5
- 24 hours on September 6
- 19 hours on September 7
- 18 hours (and still counting) on September 8

Residents of Milton have described the constant airplane noise over consecutive summer days as "horrific", "inhumane", "outrageous", "awful" and "unbearable", among many other adjectives. The increased volume of air traffic and the loud noise over protracted periods of time that Milton has experienced since the FAA began implementing NextGen at Logan Airport are unconscionable and contrary to good public policy. NextGen may have created efficiencies for airlines but it has been an abject failure for people who live under highly concentrated flight paths near airports across the country. The FAA must consider, and both the FAA and Massport should protect, the public health, safety and interests of people on the ground who have a right to the quiet enjoyment of their property. Communities such as Milton existed long before Logan Airport was constructed, let alone NextGen's concentrated flight paths were implemented. It is

⁴ If propeller plane traffic from Runway 22 is factored in, the number only increases.

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well past the time for both the FAA and Massport to provide relief to communities like Milton that are affected by ear-piercing, whining aircraft noise for hours on end.

We demand both short-term and long-term relief from the burdens that NextGen has caused for residents of Milton. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Milton Board of Selectmen

Kathleen M. Conlon

Kathleen M. Conlon, Chair

David T. Burnes

David T. Burnes, Secretary

J. Thomas Hurley

J. Thomas Hurley, Member

cc: President Barack Obama
U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx
FAA Administrator Michael Huerta
Governor Charlie Baker
U.S. Senator Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren
Congressman Stephen F. Lynch
Congressman Michael E. Capuano
State Senator Brian A. Joyce
State Representative Walter F. Timilty
State Representative Daniel R. Cullinane
Cindy L. Christiansen, Ph.D., Massport and Logan CAC Representative
Milton Airplane Noise Advisory Committee
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