



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

March 27, 2015

Mr. Ed Bolen  
President and CEO, National Business Aviation  
Association  
1200 G Street, NW., Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Bolen:

Thank you for your February 6 letter, cosigned by your aviation industry colleagues, expressing your appreciation for the science-based approach the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) takes in addressing aircraft noise, as well acknowledging recent calls for FAA to adopt new noise metrics and thresholds or to otherwise reverse appropriately adopted advanced Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) flight procedures.

The FAA continues research to better understand the impact of aviation noise on communities around airports and will continue to work to balance the benefits of NextGen with the impact to the communities around airports. The FAA is sensitive to the growing public concerns about aircraft noise and agrees that any change to current metrics and thresholds cannot be made without a sufficient body of scientific support. Accordingly, we are undertaking an ambitious research project to update the scientific evidence of the relationship between aircraft noise exposure and its effects on communities around airports in today's context of quieter aircraft, but with more aircraft operations than in the 1980s and 1990s and heightened environmental awareness.

The FAA is currently engaged in the Federal approval processes required for proposed surveys. Once approved, the national survey will be carried out by telephone and mail around selected U.S. airports. These results will then be used to determine whether changes to the FAA's use of the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) 65 dB noise metric are warranted. If changes are determined to be warranted, revised policy and related guidance will be proposed and will be subject to public review.

This methodical approach is important to assure the scientific and policy integrity of the FAA's determination of significant noise impact, consideration of the compatibility of land uses with aircraft noise levels, and justification for federal expenditures on noise mitigation measures such as sound insulation.

In summary, the FAA is taking the necessary steps to review and update the scientific underpinnings that guide the selection of the appropriate noise metric threshold, and we are strongly committed to continuing to reduce aircraft noise impacts while realizing the benefits of NextGen operational procedures, like PBN.

We have sent an identical letter to each of the cosigners of your letter.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me or Molly Harris, Acting Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael P. Huerta', with a circled number '1' to the right.

Michael P. Huerta  
Administrator