

The founders of the National Quiet Skies Coalition have joined together to create a new organization called the Quiet Skies Conference (QSC).

In the spring of 2015, representatives from a few local aviation noise advocacy groups organized the National Quiet Skies Coalition, a forum to exchange information and ideas. Since then, some Coalition members have worked together informally on national issues.

Over the past few months, it has become apparent that the time is right to work together more formally. The result is the QSC, an enterprise for advocacy as well as information-sharing.

The Quiet Skies Conference is a not-for-profit corporation. Its steering committee and Board of Directors is composed of the 6 founding members of the National Quiet Skies Coalition. Our goal is to more formally align the interests of advocacy groups nationwide and strengthen our representation. QSC will connect with national leaders, elected officials and aviation stakeholders on national issues. The Coalition's Google Groups forum will continue to provide advocacy groups with a clearinghouse for information.

The QSC has formulated the following national goals as our initial advocacy platform:

A. Include community representation at all stages of the decision-making process when making decisions that affect communities.

1. Hold public hearings with public comment before changing flight procedures or implementing new flight procedures.
2. Design environmentally-sound flight procedures locally, with community input into design and planning in advance of FAA decision-making.
3. Include the impact of aviation noise and pollution on affected communities as a mandatory criterion when the FAA assesses the overall benefits of changes to aviation procedures.
4. Appoint a community representative as a voting member of each decision-making entity that makes aviation decisions affecting communities.
5. Establish a formal process to track the progress and completion of deliverables due under the 2018 Reauthorization Act and report them to Congress and the public.

B. Use metrics that measure the true impact of noise.

1. Support the development of accurate, appropriate noise metrics when considering the impact of aviation noise on affected communities. Report to Congress and the public on statute-mandated evaluation and development of supplemental metrics.
2. Update FAA calculation and modeling methods to reflect human experience of episodic aviation noise and vibration, including model validation with measured acoustic data recorded in communities located below flight paths. When considering flight path changes, the FAA should consider the concentration of extended noise, the frequency of flights, air traffic from 10PM to 7AM and the impact of low frequency noise.
3. Publish the existing annual noise contours and Noise Exposure Maps produced by FAA out to 55 dB DNL for at least the 30 largest airports.

4. Use the already-approved metric of Nx (e.g. N65) when providing background data to communities about proposed flight path changes.
5. Replace the DNL metric with other updated metrics used successfully in other parts of the world.
6. Use metrics that distinguish between day and night noise.

C. Protect public health and the environment in communities impacted by aviation noise and pollution.

1. Restore full funding to the EPA's Office of Noise Abatement and Control.
2. Return to full NEPA environmental procedures. Eliminate the automatic categorical exclusion for all NextGen flight procedures. Calculate the environmental impacts of fuel emissions and aviation noise by cumulative rather than "per flight" measures.
3. Require the FAA to publish the results of its current Noise Annoyance Study no later than March 1, 2019.
4. Update the Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 to include consideration of public health issues and restore some local controls.

We think the industry must work with community organizations in order to get where it wants to go, and vice versa. We see an opportunity to pursue strategic, collaborative relationships and foster rational discussion among aviation stakeholders. It is possible for a robust aviation industry to exist along with environmental and health protections for communities on the ground.

If your membership organization is in alignment with our goals and methods, we would welcome your support and participation. We look forward to working with aviation-focused advocacy groups to enhance our voice and presence, and empower our movement.

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