

LAX Community Noise Roundtable

Aviation Noise News Update
November 14, 2012



FAA Proposes Stage 3 Noise Standards for New Helicopters

- The FAA has proposed Stage 3 noise standards for new helicopter designs and for supplemental certificates for new helicopter designs
- The FAA's proposal stems from increasing numbers of public complaints about helicopter noise and demands from members in Congress
- The Proposed Stage 3 Standards are:
 - 3 EPNdB more stringent than Stage 2 standards for takeoff
 - 4 EPNdB more stringent than Stage 2 standards for overflights
 - 1 EPNdB more stringent than Stage 2 standards on approach
- “Given the complexity and expense in developing new helicopter models, applications for only two new helicopter type designs will be submitted to the agency in the next decade,” the FAA estimates.
- The proposal does not require Stage 2 helicopters to be retrofitted to meet Stage 3 standards or to be phased out

EPNdB = Effective Perceived Noise Level in decibels

GAO Says FAA Needs To Better Ensure Eligibility of AIP Noise Grants

- **The Government Accountability Office (GAO) told Congress, “The FAA needs to better ensure that airport noise mitigation projects are eligible for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) noise grants.”**
- **The GAO was informing the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee (Committee) regarding the FAA’s enforcement of AIP noise grants eligibility criteria**
- **Two areas of concern brought forth by the GAO**
 - “FAA has not uniformly enforced accuracy of noise exposure maps”
 - “FAA has inconsistently applied program criteria for interior noise level assessments”
- **The FAA does not always require up-to-date noise exposure maps and half of all airport noise exposure maps are from the 1990s or earlier**
- **The GAO reports “airports have little incentive to update maps and limit residential treatment because doing so might eliminate planned projects expected by the public”**

GAO Says FAA Needs To Better Ensure Eligibility of AIP Noise Grants (contd.)

- The Committee is concerned that air traffic will grow by 20 percent by 2024, and noise impacts could diminish quality of life in communities if not mitigated
- Since 1982, the FAA has provided \$5.8 billion in AIP noise grants to 481 airports; however, indicators point to a decline in future demand for noise grant projects
- The GAO recommended that the FAA
 - “Establish a strategic noise reduction goal that aligns with the nature and extent of airport noise and targets the agency’s noise grant program;”
 - “Establish performance measures to assess progress towards this goal....”

Program Guidance Letter Aimed At Addressing Inconsistency Issue

- On August 17, 2012, the FAA issued its new Program Guidance Letter (PGL) on funding eligibility for airport sound insulation programs
- The Deputy Director of the FAA's Office of Airport Planning and Programming, Elliot Black says:
 - The objective of the PGL was to retain congressional confidence in the program
 - The PGL also addressed inconsistencies in how the FAA regional offices and airport district offices were administering the program
- The Deputy Director spoke at the 12th Annual Airport Noise Mitigation Symposium in Buffalo, NY on October 1, 2012
- Others say the PGL was issued to forestall an audit of the FAA's FAR Part 150 Noise Compatibility Program that recently came into question in a GAO report (see previous slide)
- The new PGL says that the 45 dB DNL interior noise level criteria is a requirement that homes and other structures must meet in addition to being located within an airport's 65 dB DNL contour

Program Guidance Letter Aimed At Addressing Inconsistency Issue

Contd.

- **The Deputy Director’s mission now is to identify and resolve any inconsistencies in the way FAA personnel are interpreting the PGL by:**
 - Asking sound insulation consultants who work on projects around the country to contact him personally if there is confusion with the PGL
 - By conducting weekly conference calls with regional offices and airports district offices (ADOs) to discuss PGL issues
- **Conference participants said the FAA needs to resolve issues quickly so that airports can move forward with their sound insulation programs**
- **Three corrections to the PGL have been identified including two minor omissions in the footnotes. The other correction/clarification concerns “neighborhood equity” in sound insulation programs**
 - A standard noise insulation package will be prepared for homes in the 65dB DNL contour that meet the interior noise level requirement.
 - Program sponsors will prepare a secondary package consisting of other improvements to homes that do not meet the 45 dB DNL interior noise level requirement
 - Secondary package participation must be less than 10 percent of the residences in a specific neighborhood, and in no case more than 20 homes

FAA Studying Concentration of Flight Tracks Under NextGen

- **The FAA is studying the issue of concentrated flight tracks as a result of very precise RNAV (GPS) routes being developed as part of NextGen**
 - Questions concerning the use of supplemental noise metrics in cases where NextGen procedures significantly increase noise events over a concentrated area, or in areas outside of the 65 dB DNL contour were asked to Elliot Black, Deputy Director of the FAA's Office of Planning and Programming, at the 12th Annual Airport Noise Mitigation Symposium in Buffalo, NY
 - The FAA is looking at concentrated flight tracks that are a new and growing source of airport noise complaints
 - The FAA is working to update its FAR Part 150 Advisory Circular
 - While airport operators can adopt land use compatibility standards for areas outside the 65 dB DNL contour, Black noted that “it gets a little dicey” if the FAA addresses noise issues outside of the 65 dB DNL contour
- **Elliot Black stated he was concerned about how much funding would be available for noise mitigation projects in 2013**
 - The AIP program has been expanded to cover not only air emissions and land use compatibility, but also some water quality projects, so overall there is less money for noise
 - Airports delayed drawing their full entitlement funding from the FAA due to the lack of a multi-year FAA reauthorization bill. Now that the Bill has been passed, airports are expected to ask for more money , some of which may come from the AIP discretionary fund

FAA asks the RTCA for Help with CATEX Provision for Performance Based Navigation (PBN)

- **The FAA asked the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics' (RTCA) NextGen Advisory Committee (NAC) for help in determining if it is possible to comply with provisions of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012**
 - Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) procedures can be given Categorical Exclusion (CatEx) from environmental review if implementation of the procedure would result in measureable reductions in fuel consumption, carbon dioxide emissions, and noise on a **per flight basis**
- **The FAA has not been able to develop a “technically sound approach” to measuring reductions in noise on a per flight basis**
- **The FAA Administrator asked the NAC to:**
 - Review technical analysis done by the FAA
 - Provide suggestions on other ways to comply with CatEx2 (FAA's term for the provision)
 - “To the extent the NAC believes CatEx2 cannot be implemented effectively and/or even if implemented would not have a desired impact, provide practical and /or legislative recommendations that would help streamline environmental review of PBN procedures”
- **The NAC will develop recommendations for the NAC's February 7, 2013 meeting**

FAA asks the RTCA for Help with CATEX Provision for PBN (cont.)

- The CatEx provisions for PBN procedures present several problems:
 - Legal and technical issues on how to measure noise reductions on a per flight basis
 - Single event metrics do not solve the problem
 - Look only at source noise (i.e., the aircraft) and not the receiver?
 - Sets new requirements for including fuel consumption and carbon dioxide emissions, but excludes air quality provisions
 - Compliance with air quality pollutants under the Clean Air Act
 - The practical use of CatEx2
 - “All other CatEx determinations are based on having no extraordinary circumstances...and no significant impacts; therefore, procedures that would result in increases in impacts are still eligible for a CatEx as long as the increases do not reach significant levels and there are no extraordinary circumstances,”
 - CatEx2 establishes a more demanding standard of measurable reductions

Access to FAA Automated Radar Terminal System (ARTS) Data

- **FAA informed some airports of pending removal of direct connections to the FAA's ARTS flight track data systems at local TRACONS.** (FAA revised FAA Order 1200.22E, "External Requests for National Airspace System (NAS) Data" in January 2012)
 - Provides critical input to airport noise and operations monitoring systems (NOMS) – 100 airports affected by the revised policy says Airports Council International – North America
 - Only one apparent source using an FAA approved secured gateway for ARTS radar flight track data – ITT Exelis
 - Airports will now have to pay for the ARTS radar data
 - Initially announced a disconnection date of 12/15/12; FAA clarified this date as the response deadline for FAA to report back to the Inspector General's Office with a plan to remove these direct ARTS data connections at the TRACONS
- **ACI-NA and AAAE hosted a webinar with the FAA and Airports October 18 to clarify new agency policy affecting access to FAA ARTS radar data**
 - The Director of FAA NAS Data Management, Woody Davis said:
 - **There is no hard date for termination of existing radar data services; FAA intends to transition to secured data gateways as soon as possible for data distribution**
 - **Will work with each airport to develop a concrete plan for transitioning in a reasonable time and manner to a Secured Gateway to continue access to accurate, complete radar data**
 - ACI-NA to seek additional clarification regarding limited source of ARTS data feed