

DC METROPLEX BWI COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE
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BWI Community Roundtable Issues Annual Report on Airport Noise Problem

BWI Roundtable describes the challenges in carrying out its work to mitigate the dramatic increase in jet plane noise in the region

Linthicum, MD – The DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable (the Roundtable), formed in March 2017 at the direction of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to address airplane noise in the region, issued its 2017 Annual Report today. The report lists challenges the Roundtable is facing in meeting its goal of mitigating the noise effects of the new air traffic control procedures at BWI Thurgood Marshall International Airport (BWI Marshall). The Roundtable report also offers possible solutions to those challenges.

The shift in BWI flight patterns is part of a multibillion-dollar program, called NextGen, designed to upgrade the nation's commercial air traffic system by moving away from the World War II-era radar systems to satellite technology. The stated goal of the system is to increase efficiency, while maintaining safety. FAA officials have stated the change will save fuel and reduce emissions because planes fly more direct routes. For example, FAA officials have said that, in Atlanta, at the nation's busiest airport, the system has helped speed up departures by forty-eight percent. The new system has proved controversial because noise from the concentrated flight paths has increased dramatically, much of it in areas where there had previously been little or no plane noise, resulting in multiple lawsuits nationally against the FAA over how the program has been implemented.

At its initial meeting in March 2017 the Roundtable, in a unanimous resolution, recommended that the FAA immediately revert back to pre-Next Gen procedures in order to provide urgent relief to affected residents, while a more deliberate and public-facing process to develop and implement NextGen and a DC Metroplex plan protective of residents is undertaken. The resolution was transmitted as a request to the FAA which it has rejected. Instead, the FAA formed an internal working group to explore possible flight path changes and is expected to present the results of its deliberations to the Roundtable in April 2018, 13 months after the initial Roundtable resolution. The FAA

has agreed to move two departure turns; however, the FAA has dismissed the Roundtable's request for raising aircraft altitudes and eliminating concentrated flight paths created by the NextGen scheme.

Since its formation and initial resolution, the Roundtable has held monthly public meetings with representatives of the FAA, Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) and the airlines. Each meeting has included public testimony by residents of all surrounding communities as to the detrimental impact on their daily lives. The report summarizes the progress, or lack thereof, during the last 14 months.

Among the challenges identified by the Roundtable are that the FAA essentially disowns responsibility for the noise and other environmental harm it causes by its decisions and there is no federal legislative mandate requiring the FAA to consider or address the "complete" noise effect of its air traffic control plan. Also, the Roundtable determined that the noise standards used by the FAA, which were adopted in 1971, are ineffective to protect residents against the noise concentrating effect of modern technology.

Governor Hogan's request that Maryland Attorney General Frosh pursue a lawsuit against the FAA is viewed by the Roundtable as a source of potential relief for residents. Another possible solution is getting new legislation passed at the federal level addressing noise as part of the FAA funding reauthorization bill currently before Congress. Maryland's Congressional delegation, led by Senator Van Hollen, is working with the Roundtable to explore this avenue. The Roundtable may also continue working with the Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland Aviation Administration to reduce the impact of flight operations out of BWI, including seeking the help of the airlines.

BWI Roundtable Chair Lance Brasher, a resident of District 33, stated that "While we have had many interactions with the FAA and MAA, ultimately we are limited in our ability to bring about a change in their approach. With this report, we hope to get even greater and more active support of community members, elected officials, the airport authority, members of the aviation community, and other stakeholders for more far-reaching solutions that give back residents their quality of life."

For all information related to the Roundtable, please visit <http://maacommunityrelations.com>

About the DC Metroplex BWI Community Roundtable (BWI Roundtable)

The BWI Roundtable is an initiative of the Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA), begun in March 2017 at the request of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Based on the quality and availability of timely technical and explanatory information, the Roundtable is responsible for monitoring the implementation of air traffic procedures established by FAA in the District of Columbia Metroplex Project, including but not limited to the procedures implemented under the NextGen program; identifying possible alternative routings and procedures; evaluating noise effects and other environmental effects, of possible route changes; and making recommendations to the FAA for further consideration. The BWI Roundtable consists of 21 voting members representing Maryland State Legislative districts 9, 12, 13, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 44, along with representatives for the Anne Arundel, Howard and Baltimore County Executives' offices and for Anne Arundel and Howard County Councils.