

DONALD S. BEYER, JR.
8TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4608

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1119 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4376

DISTRICT OFFICE:
1901 N. MOORE STREET
SUITE 1108
ARLINGTON, VA 22209

February 22, 2019

Hon. Michael P. Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

I write to inquire about the status of the FAA's response to the Reagan National Community Noise Working Group's (DCA Working Group) request to modify flight paths and possibly waypoints south of DCA. The DCA Working Group made this request to the FAA on August 11, 2016, and the community continues, over two years later, to wait on FAA's response while enduring pervasive airplane noise.

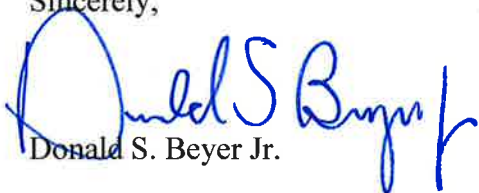
I understand that the FAA has been reviewing the DCA Working Group's request and has been discussing proposals with the Working Group for a new south flow departure procedure aimed to mitigate noise by flying planes further down the Potomac River before their turn west, and I appreciate this effort. Nonetheless, I remain concerned with the length of time this has taken, and the lack of real action in implementing new procedures.

On June 6, 2017, when you last wrote in response to my inquiry into the matter, you assured me that the FAA would "do [its] best to hit the 12-18-month publication dates for south flow changes once formal design begins, though it is possible the work could stretch to 24 months" depending on a variety of factors.¹ As I understand, the formal design began in August 2016. Now, in mid-February 2019, it has been 30 months that the community has been waiting.

I hear directly from members of the community regularly that the airplane noise has not ceased or been alleviated, and the community and I remain eager to see the new planned procedures, and to continue working alongside the FAA towards quieting our skies.

I urge you to move this process along as expeditiously as possible, and to provide an updated timeline for the publication dates of south flow modifications. I know you understand the importance of addressing airplane noise in our communities, and I appreciate your continued effort on this front.

Sincerely,


Donald S. Beyer Jr.

¹ Letter from FAA Administrator Huerta to Congressman Beyer on June 6, 2017, attached.



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

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

June 6, 2017

The Honorable Donald S. Beyer Jr.
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Beyer:

Thank you for your April 7 letter about the timetable for Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) south flow departure procedure modifications.

Early last year the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) was asked to explore the possibility of aircraft flying further south before turning west. We collaborated with the Reagan National Community Noise Working Group (WG) for several months and developed a notional procedure based on WG feedback. On August 11, 2016, the WG officially proposed that the FAA revise the DCA south flow area navigation standard instrument departures in order to increase aircraft flight time over the Potomac River. The proposal has aircraft remaining over the river as far south as possible before initiating a turn to the west.

The purpose of the revision is to mitigate aircraft noise concerns of various communities on each side of the river. Although we are currently scheduling new procedure work almost 4 years in the future, this work remains a priority for the FAA. Demand remains very high because much of our work focuses on safety critical efforts. However, we remain committed to expediting this work as much as possible. Our work in formal procedure design, development, and implementation is a process that incorporates mandatory safety and environmental reviews as well as community involvement. It is also a collaborative process with local air traffic facilities and operators to ensure the procedure will work effectively with traffic flow and air traffic control and aircraft automation. This is especially critical in complex airspace with several major airports in close proximity.

There are a limited number of people available for this work, and we were initially asked to concentrate our efforts on the north flows at DCA. We will do our best to hit the 12-18-month publication dates for south flow changes once formal design begins, though it is possible the work could stretch to 24 months depending on community outreach needs, environmental analysis, waivers, and other safety requirements. We will have more clarity as the formal design work gets underway in the next 2-3 months. We will keep the WG updated regularly and will do what we can to decrease the overall time to publication.

Please visit <http://www.faa.gov/nextgen/communityengagement/dc/> for information related to ongoing efforts at DCA to try and address community noise concerns.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael P. Huerta', enclosed within a circular flourish.

Michael P. Huerta
Administrator