

DONALD S. BEYER JR.
8TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
(CHAIRMAN)

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Congress of the United States
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Washington, DC 20515-4608

March 16, 2022

Director James M. Murray
U.S. Secret Service
245 Murray Lane SW – Building T-5
Washington, DC 20223

Administrator Stephen Dickson
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Director Murray and Administrator Dickson,

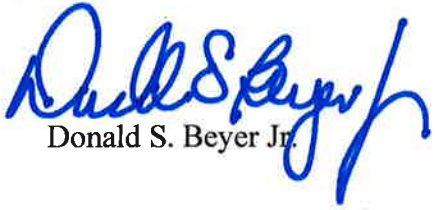
I write to request an update on the “Prohibited Area 56 National Security Project (Project),” which changed approach and departure procedures at Washington National Airport (DCA) at the request of the United States Secret Service, in order to reduce incursions into restricted airspace by the White House, National Mall, and Naval Observatory. While I understand the national security implications of these procedural changes, I remain concerned about the concentration of airplane noise it has caused in Northern Virginia and the process by which the changes were undertaken.

As of January 30, 2020, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) began a new departure procedure and database waypoint for aircraft operating at DCA, in which the RNAV departures waypoint was moved from the middle of the Potomac River into Virginia. These changes were implemented without an environmental review and substantive community engagement, which are both crucial steps in the normal procedural change review process. In fact, the procedure in question had been previously proposed and rejected by the community because it concentrated air traffic over neighborhood and school in Maryland, Virginia, and DC.

Additionally, since these changes were implemented just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic’s negative impact on air travel, the effects are just now being felt within the community. According to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, there were about half as many passengers passing through DCA in 2020, as compared to 2021. As such, air traffic has picked up significantly in the past year and my constituents are now bearing the burden of the procedural changes through increased and concentrated aircraft noise over their neighborhoods.

I urge the FAA, in consultation with the U.S. Secret Service, to halt these procedural changes until a proper environmental review process is completed and the concerns of affected communities are taken into consideration and look forward to receiving the update on the Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald S. Beyer Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Donald S. Beyer Jr.