

Congressmembers send letter calling on agency to reconsider new flight patterns that negatively impact quality of life throughout the borough □ □

U.S. Reps. Grace Meng (D-Queens) and Steve Israel (D-Queens/L.I.) today sent a letter to the head of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) urging him to take into account vital community feedback when evaluating the effects of new flight patterns that significantly increase airplane noise over Queens.

The new flight patterns, which redirect many departures from LaGuardia Airport over residential neighborhoods in northeast Queens, were implemented in February 2012 on a six month trial basis. This past December, the FAA announced that it would make the new routes permanent.

The substantial rise in airplane noise has negatively impacted the quality of life in northeast Queens, and has sparked protests from area residents who have noticed a marked increase in the frequency of flights.

“While we acknowledge that there is no perfect solution to airspace congestion, we believe that our constituents have been unfairly and unexpectedly burdened,” Meng and Israel wrote in their correspondence to FAA Administrator Michel Huerta. “The new routes were implemented without the consultation of local elected officials and constituents, an oversight that Carmine Gallo, the FAA Regional Administrator, acknowledged at a FAA briefing for local officials on January 18, 2013. We hope that the FAA is able to produce a more balanced plan that would alleviate the noise pollution for our constituents and restore the quality of life in our neighborhoods.”

Meng and Israel’s letter notes that the FAA’s environmental review of the new routes analyzed noise pollution by simulation only rather than actual noise testing on the ground.

“I would like to thank both Congressman Israel and Congresswoman Meng for requesting a meeting with FAA Acting Administrator Huerta and for joining Assembly Member Braunstein and I in an effort to resolve this situation which has resulted in extreme increases in noise pollution in northeast Queens” said New York State Senator Tony Avella (D-Bayside).

"I want to thank Congresswoman Meng and Congressman Israel for urging the FAA to take measures to provide our constituents with relief from the constant barrage of plane noise, which has destroyed the quality of life of the residents of Northeast Queens," said New York Assemblyman Edward Braunstein (D-Bayside) "I look forward to working with both of them to ensure that our constituents are given an opportunity by the FAA to voice their concerns regarding the new flight pattern."

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