

## **Donaldson Run Civic Association**

January 3, 2024

Honorable Maria Cantwell, Chairwoman  
Honorable Ted Cruz, Ranking Member

Honorable Tammy Duckworth, Chairwoman  
Honorable Jerry Moran, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Aviation Safety, Operations and Innovation

Committee on Commerce, Science and Technology  
U.S. Senate  
Russell Senate Office Building Room 254  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwomen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the Donaldson Run Civic Association (DRCA), I am writing in strong opposition to any amendment to the pending FAA reauthorization bill that would increase the number of flights landing at Reagan National Airport. We urge your committee and subcommittee, in voting out this bill to extend the FAA's authorization, to reject any such amendment -- as the House did in its version of the bill last year.

DRCA is a neighborhood civic organization in Arlington, Virginia, comprised of households living directly under the current flight path to and from this airport, along the Potomac River to the northwest of the airport. Along with other similar civic organizations in Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland, DRCA has been actively engaged for over 30 years in seeking to minimize the sometimes deafening noise from increasing numbers of flights to and from Reagan National Airport, disrupting the quiet enjoyment of our residents' homes arising from decisions of air carriers not to follow the Potomac River on these flights. In recent years, the FAA prescribed low altitude flight paths directly over these homes, using precision guidance on all approaches and thus worsening the problem.

For all of the reasons outlined in the letter filed with you on May 16, 2023, by the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport DCA Community Noise Working Group, in which DRCA has participated, adding even more such slot exemptions would represent a significant step backwards from our efforts to address this increasing problem to our residents, particularly from long haul flights that use more fuel and require more thrust and create greater noise. With the new Metro Silver Line, the unused capacity at Dulles International Airport makes it a much more sensible venue for any additional flights that are deemed warranted.

Indeed, any such amendment would appear to be inconsistent with a key premise of the FAA reauthorization legislation. Sections 476 and 477 of the House version of that bill emphasize the need for feedback from "individuals living in the vicinity of airports." They would also require the FAA to seek, in implementing or revising flight procedures, specifically to take the following steps to reduce (not increase) unreasonable aircraft noise:

- implement flight procedures "that can mitigate the impact of aircraft noise."

- “[w]ork with . . . potentially impacted neighboring communities in establishing or modifying aircraft arrival and departure routes.”
- “[d]iscourage local encroachment of residential or other buildings near airports that could create future airport noise complaints.”

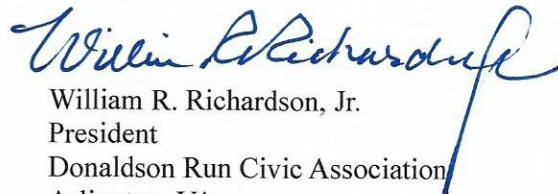
Similarly, Section 917 of the Senate version of this reauthorization legislation would mandate consultation with an Aircraft Noise Advisory Committee, and Section 1001 would take specific action to mitigate noise at the Boise Airport, highlighting this issue at yet another airport.

Proposals to increase such slots proceed from no such consultation with local communities or consideration of the adverse impacts of such additional flights. For this reason, and because it would move in entirely the opposite direction from the efforts outlined above, we urge that you reject any effort to add this proposal to your pending FAA reauthorization bill, or otherwise to report out the DCA Act (S. 1933), or any other such legislation that would increase such flights to this particular airport.

In light of the traffic jams and long security lines at DCA during record-breaking Thanksgiving travel, the choice could now not be clearer. We urge the Senate to adopt FAA reauthorization legislation that invests in safe, efficient travel to our nation’s capital without more delays, cancellations, and congestion at DCA. This in no way detracts from the effort to address other problems of air traffic controller vacancies and performance. Indeed, introducing the contentious issue of additional DCA flights rejected in the House version of the bill would only threaten the ability to ensure that the FAA’s authorization does not expire by the current deadline of March 4, 2024.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our views on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



William R. Richardson, Jr.  
President  
Donaldson Run Civic Association  
Arlington, VA