

Staten Island Advocate

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400 tell FAA at hearing: No more noise from Newark

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Staten Island residents last night demanded that planes departing Newark International Airport be routed away from the island.

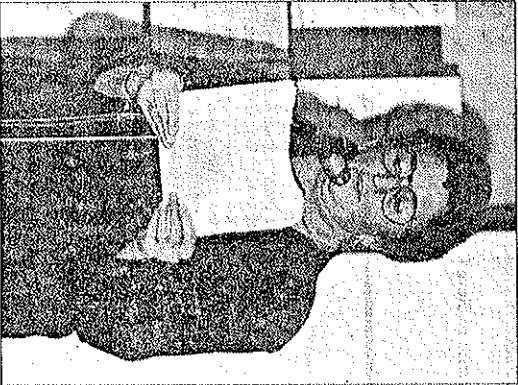
At a public meeting sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to discuss two recently completed studies on aircraft noise in the metropolitan region, borough officials and about 400 residents charged that neither study sufficiently addressed Staten Island's noise problem and demanded that FAA officials develop a solution to the Island's noise problem immediately.

As the planes thundered over PS 44, Mariners Harbor residents told FAA officials what it's like to live in a community where telephone conversations are often impossible and children have made a game out of reading the name on low-flying planes as they soar overhead.

Arlington resident Jean Crisson testified that planes frequently fly below the required altitude of 1,000 feet when passing over Arlington and Mariners Harbor.

She also said that residents and borough officials have recorded noise decibel readings of more than 100, while the FAA's computer-generated noise readings claim that aircraft noise on Staten Island does not exceed 65 decibels.

"Sometimes the planes are less than 20 seconds



Jean Crisson discusses low-flying planes.



William Marks of the Federal Aviation Administration, at left, listens to comments during the hearing at PS 44.

ADVANCE PHOTOS/MIKE PALCO

apart and it's not uncommon for 441 planes to fly over the Island each day," said Mrs. Crisson, who also serves as president of F.A.T.E. (Flight Airplanes Threatening the Environment). "These planes shake the foundations of our homes and cause objects to fall off the walls and shelves."

"The constant unbearable noise causes stress, anxiety and fear, fear that one of these low-flying giants is going to crash into our community," she

said. "We have four, 13-story buildings in Arlington directly under the flight path of these planes. Does one of these buildings have to be hit before the FAA wakes up and decides that our fears are not unfounded?"

The Rev. Nicholas Soares of St. Clement-St. Michael's R.C. Church in Mariners Harbor said Sunday

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Noise

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mass and other church activities frequently are interrupted by the roar of the planes, while 8-year-old Vanessa Roman said the noise "makes it difficult to do my homework and gives my grandmother headaches."

"The only good thing about the noise is I can't hear my dad if he yells at me," she said.

Others who attended the hearing, which was held in afternoon and evening sessions, spoke of damage to their cars, homes and outdoor furniture caused by exhaust fumes and jet fuel dumped from planes flying overhead.

FAA officials said the planes only dump fuel in emergency situations but residents say it occurs on a regular basis, noting that fuel stains are commonly found on laundry left hanging outside on laundry and cars are often covered with black soot in the morning.

Both Borough President Guy V. Molinari and Rep. Susan Molinari demanded that FAA officials send employees to Staten Island to do a noise test. The FAA admitted last

night that it has never done an on-site noise level reading on Staten Island, claiming it's the responsibility of the Port Authority (P.A.).

"This ridiculous, computer-generated, 65-decibel noise level reading chart will be shown to be outdated, inaccurate and dead wrong," Molinari said.

"We've been trying to solve this noise problem for the past three years," added Ms. Molinari. "What will it take to get you out here to do a noise test to see how bad the noise problem really is?"

Ms. Molinari said she will demand a congressional study of Staten Island's noise problem if the FAA doesn't respond soon.

One of the alternatives being looked at in the recently completed draft of the New Jersey Environmental Impact Statement is fanning out the number of planes departing Newark Airport's Runway 22.

That way, only one out of every three planes would fly over Staten Island, the study said. But such a move would require yet another

study — an environmental assessment. How long that study would take is not known.

Another recently completed study, the New York Aircraft Noise Mitigation Review, recommends that planes remain over the Arthur Kill when flying over Staten Island. Pilots have been instructed to do this for years but often fail to do so, claiming that strong winds push them over residential communities.

The FAA is recommending that airlines install new flight management system equipment on board each plane to help aircraft stay on course when flying over populated areas.

Many residents last night said they were "sick and tired" of studies and wanted the FAA to take immediate action to solve the Island's noise problem.

Arlington resident Tom Pastore complained that the FAA has been promising to do something about Staten Island's noise problem since 1990 but hasn't done anything yet.

"If you don't do something soon we are going to block the airport in protest," he said. "We would rather meet with you around a table to resolve instead of at a protest at Newark Airport."

"For years jets flying below 1,000 feet have roared over the communities of Arlington and Mariners Harbor," added City Councilman Jerome X. O'Donovan. "I can tell you that residents have actually had to sell their homes to escape the deafening noise."

"Listen to these people," added City Councilman John Fusco. "Staten Island residents are tolerant for the most part, so when they do complain, it's because they have a very good reason to."

A spokesman for City Councilman Fred Cerullo said "the peace and tranquility of these residential communities has been shattered by a steady and constant assault of noise created by low-flying aircraft."

A spokesman for Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly said between 40,000 to 70,000 Staten Island residents are affected by the noise from Newark, judging by the number of complaints the assemblywoman's office receives.

"Residents of Arlington, Mariners Harbor, Graniteville, Elm Park, Travis are constantly harassed," Mrs. Connelly said in a prepared statement. "Residents of Meiers' Corners, Willowbrook and Westerleigh also routinely but less frequently record their complaints. But despite these complaints we remain an asterisk on your studies motivated by conflicting political and regional concerns."

Community School Board member Jerry Cammarata said teachers in schools affected by aircraft noise are forced to teach by the "jet pause method."

"This is causing children to lose an hour a day of quality education because of the planes going over our schools," he said.



ADVANCE PHOTO/MIKE PALCO

Rep. Susan Molinari and Borough President Guy V. Molinari ask on FAA official questions at the hearing.