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Prepared Remarks:

House Appropriations Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies
Subcommittee Member Day

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Good Afternoon Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member David Price and fellow Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity, and the time, to discuss a critical issue to many of my constituents, some of your constituents and to many of our colleagues.

Recently, I was elected co-Chair of the Quiet Skies Caucus, along with Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. We're fortunate to have Congressmen Quigley and Lynch serve as co-Vice Chairs of the caucus. All of us, along with dozens of other Members, from both sides of the aisle, have constituents who are deeply impacted by unacceptable levels of aircraft noise.

I'm a new Member of this distinguished body, but, while exploring a run for this office, aircraft noise was one of the first issues I heard about from voters. At a town hall I held last June, a constituent rose to ask about what I would, and could do, as a Member of Congress, to reduce aircraft noise over her home and neighborhood. In fact, she was interrupted twice, in less than two minutes, by aircraft passing overhead. The noise was so loud she had to pause and wait for the planes to pass before she could continue asking her question.

I represent New York's third Congressional district. The district stretches from northeastern Queens, along Long Island's north shore, through Nassau County and into Suffolk County. My constituents have two of the world's busiest and biggest airports, LaGuardia Airport

and John F. Kennedy International Airport, that lie just beyond the district's bounds. Although both airports are outside the district, both rely on flight paths that traverse numerous neighborhoods in and around my district.

This is not a discrete problem affecting a limited number of people, but a major issue impacting people across the country. Many of us rely on Reagan National Airport to return home each week. Congresswoman Holmes Norton's constituents, who call Washington D.C. home, are impacted by travelers, like ourselves, who come from our districts to engage in the people's business or to visit our Nation's Capital. Mr. Quigley's constituents live near O'Hare International Airport, one of the busiest airports in the world, and suffer greatly under the volume of flights that land and depart every day. Mr. Lynch's constituents, in around Boston's Logan Airport, also suffer from unacceptable noise levels, along with the constituents of dozens of other Members who are part of the Quiet Skies Caucus.

This is not a partisan issue. Mr. Coffman, of Colorado, is member of the Quiet Skies Caucus, and works with us, on behalf of his constituents, to alleviate and reduce unacceptable noise levels. Our friends in the Senate also believe this is an important issue. Senators McCain and Flake of Arizona have championed this cause and taken the lead in the Senate to help mitigate noise from aircraft in Arizona and across the country.

I have repeatedly tried to make the case that unacceptable noise levels is a bipartisan, national issue of significance, worthy of Congressional attention. Today, my primary goal is to impart the significance of the issue on you and our colleagues.

I recently held a roundtable discussion with constituents who suffer from unacceptable noise levels. One of the key takeaways was a realization that there is an ongoing failure to understand the seriousness of the issue. In other words, persuasion remains an issue and, a continuing failure to inform has undermines the potential for serious action and policy changes. In order to legitimize concerns, I believe we need federally funded health studies, conducted by the leading universities in our country, to demonstrate that this issue objectively raises health concerns.

I've followed up with Members of the Quiet Skies Caucus and found they agree with this conclusion and, even, relayed their own constituent's frustrations that their complaints are often dismissed without due consideration. We believe these studies, which will objectively determine the impact on individual's and their family's health, will demonstrate the need for all stakeholders to address the issue.

In addition to health studies, and while they are conducted, I believe other steps should be taken in the interim. Many districts are experiencing unacceptable noise levels as a result of Next Gen route changes. While the FAA says the noise is within the acceptable 65 Day Night Level, that standard was developed more than a decade ago. I believe the FAA needs to conduct an expedited review of the 65 DNL standard and incorporate actual noise sampling, not just rely on modeling and simulation. Therefore, I ask the Committee to include report language urging the FAA to expedite the DNL review and to provide the Committee with a report no later than 60 days after enactment of the ACT, describing a pilot program for conducting actual noise sampling as part of the DNL review.

On its face, the issue may appear to be one of mere annoyance, but I can assure you this is not a trivial issue. The Members and Senators I have mentioned above, and many more, can echo and expand upon the thoughts and points I have raised today. Our constituents raise legitimate concerns because they are subjected to unacceptable noise levels, at a volume and frequency, that dramatically impact their quality of life, as well as their health. My hope is this subcommittee will join with us to assist from across the country, by raising the profile of this issue and working with us towards results and getting things done for the American people.