

26,500 miles. While Federal regulations require automobiles to undergo stringent emissions testing and certification, aircraft do not receive the same level of scrutiny. We all want to live in a peaceful and safe location.

And I would simply say I understand the needs of airports and airlines. I said yesterday in my remarks to the ACI, airports, airlines connect us to the world and to the Nation. They are the engine of economic opportunity. But I also am concerned about the communities that grow up around them or are already there when they have to expand. We must find a way in this Government to assist our local governments in this effort of mitigation.

I want to thank the ranking member and the chairman for their consideration. Let me say that I do not know if we have unanimous consent to extend for a response, but I hope to ask both the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) and the ranking member for their consideration of this important issue.

Exposure to excessive noise (that is, 55 decibels) can: (1) Lower children's learning and academic performance, (2) increase blood pressure and incidence of cardiovascular disease, (3) cause mental health disorders, stress, and depression, and (4) cause work performance issues. Each decibel increase in airport noise results in a 0.5 to 2.0 percent decrease in real estate value.

According to a 1998 Cornell University study, the constant roar of a jet aircraft can seriously affect the health and psychological well-being of children. These health problems include higher blood pressure and boosted levels of stress hormones and have lifelong effects.

On April 17, 2003, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposed to modify the Houston Class B airspace area. The FAA proposed this action due to a significant growth in aircraft operations over the past 10 years and thousands of complaints from residents. To address this growth, the City of Houston completed construction of a new Runway 8L/26R in October 2003. Since the runway expansion, residents near the airport have suffered increased noise and vibrations from aircraft and airport operations and the complaints have actually doubled! While the Airport and FAA have taken some steps toward mitigation, local residents continue to raise legitimate concerns and demand that more be done to solve the noise problem.

I joined my colleagues Mr. LAMPSON, GREEN, and BRADY in calling for Houston Airport Systems to make improvements to its noise abatement program for aircraft operations at Intercontinental Airport (IAH). This problem still exists, so I ask this Subcommittee to use this legislation, H.R. 5025 as a vehicle to bring peace and good health to densely populated communities like the one surrounding Intercontinental in Houston.

Each member should understand the significant environmental impact that airports have on abutting communities. The concept of "Not In My Back Yard" usually comes to mind when we speak of nuisances and their effect on communities. One 747 arriving and departing from JFK airport in New York City pro-

duces as much smog as a car driven over 5,600 miles and as much noxious nitrogen oxides as a car driven nearly 26,500 miles. While Federal regulations require automobiles to undergo stringent emissions testing and certification, aircraft do not receive the same level of scrutiny. We all want a peaceful and safe place to raise our children and to live.

I speak now to advocate for families like one of my constituents who is actually a pilot out of Intercontinental Airport (IAH). He indicated that aircraft would fly between 300–500 feet away from his home in the Woodcreek Subdivision of Houston, TX. Furthermore, as a pilot, he measured the height of some of his own flights as low as 540 feet above heavily populated areas—and this was typical of flight patterns out of the airport.

He, his wife, and his two children once counted over 150 flights directly over his home. The health impacts of such proximity to flying aircraft are tremendous and inhuman. Federal dollars are needed to standardize flight patterns and design runways in such a way that respects the health of abutting communities—regardless of whether the region has zoning laws on its books.

Legislation such as H.R. 5025 allocates funds for enhancements to be made for modes of transportation. These funds should not be allocated without the inclusion of funding for damage mitigation and future monitoring for damages to abutting communities. I suggest that language should be included in this legislation that restricts funding for airports unless adequate damage or nuisance mitigation plans and agreements have been executed. Furthermore, this legislation needs more oversight provisions in the area of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The agency should not have the ability to publish and promulgate rules that serve to hurt communities. Appropriations legislation serves as effective tools for guiding government behavior.

As I have learned from community activist groups in Houston, we must work to guide the FAA to change the way it assigns its air space categories. Low intercept altitudes should not be allowed in heavily populated areas or where landing paths cannot avoid residential areas. These low intercept altitudes decrease property values severely, destroy quality of life, promote illness and disease among inhabitants, and do not aid our efforts to keep our homeland secure in light of current elevated threat levels. Furthermore, we should include mandatory noise and pollution monitoring for areas that abut airports and lower the legal designation of "significant noise" from 65 DNL to 55 DNL.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that the conferees take this grave issue into consideration, and I support the legislation.

LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

Federal:
Mandatory damage mitigation funding.
Reduce Class B Airspace over populated areas.
Increased FAA oversight.
Mandatory noise and pollution monitoring.
Enforcement of land use and clean air assurances.

State and Local:
Direct notice laws.
Mandatory noise abatement procedures for airport owners.
Mandatory land use management plans around airports.

[May 26, 2004, Coalition of Homeowner Alliances Requiring Government Equity]

CHARGE SHORT RANGE GOALS?

Short Range Goals:
Combat the noise of IAH.
Address the related pollution exposures.
Secure compensation for those experiencing extreme noise.

[May 26, 2004, Coalition of Homeowner Alliances Requiring Government Equity]

Mr. NEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the \$15 million appropriation in the Transportation-Treasury bill dedicated to enabling the Election Assistance Commission, EAC, to carry out its responsibilities under the Help America Vote Act, HAVA. During its first year in existence, the EAC has done a commendable job in carrying out its responsibilities while operating on a shoestring budget. In order for the Commission to fully achieve the many tasks assigned to it by HAVA, however, it will need the \$15 million appropriated in this bill during the upcoming fiscal year.

The funds being made available will ensure that the EAC has the resources necessary for conducting research on voting system security and other important election-related issues. It will also allow the EAC to hire the staff and invest in the infrastructure needed to fulfill its numerous HAVA obligations.

The American people demand and deserve a voting process in which they can have full confidence. That is why I am proud to have been a chief sponsor and author of HAVA, which holds the potential for fundamentally improving the health of our Nation's democracy. The EAC plays an important role in ensuring that the promise of HAVA becomes a reality.

I, therefore, urge my colleagues to support the \$15 million appropriation to the EAC.

Mr. ISTOOK. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FLAKE) having assumed the chair, Mr. THORNBERRY, Chairman pro tempore of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5025) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation and Treasury, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

Accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1832

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE) at 6 o'clock and 32 minutes p.m.