



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

March 9, 2016

Mr. Ricky D. Smith, Sr.  
Executive Director/CEO  
Maryland Aviation Administration  
P.O. Box 8766  
BWI Airport, MD 21240

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for your October 22, 2015, letter about public noise concerns associated with the closure of Runway 10/28 and changes in aircraft departure paths at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI). You also expressed concern that since March 2015, departure procedures at BWI have varied from approved flight procedures contained in BWI's Noise Compatibility Program (NCP) and the State mandated Noise Abatement Plan (NAP). You asked that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) revise the departure procedures to comply with your administration's NCP and NAP departure procedures and to be included in the review and approval of any further procedure changes at BWI.

The flight procedures associated with the Washington, D.C., Optimization of Airspace and Procedures in the Metroplex (Metroplex) were coordinated and studied under an Environmental Assessment (EA). In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the FAA released for public review and comment the EA that was prepared to consider the potential environmental impacts associated with the DC Metroplex. Members of the DC Metroplex Project Team met with your office to discuss the proposed project before implementation.

Our research indicates the concern regarding aircraft noise may be due to construction and the temporary closure of Runway 28, which have caused additional usage of Runway 15 Right for departing aircraft. Runway 10/28 construction was completed and returned to normal service on December 22, 2015. Therefore, the frequency of Runway 15 Right departures should have returned to normal use.

Additionally, the other concern regarding noise may have been due to the altitude aircraft must reach prior to turning to the northwest. As of February 4, 2016, this altitude was changed to a higher altitude. Prior to the change, a northwest turn occurred at 667 feet, but now it occurs at 850 feet. This change should keep aircraft over the Potomac River up to a mile from the departure end of the runway. Of course, not all aircraft will reach this altitude at the same location.

We are committed to full transparency and coordination of our proposed actions and will continue to work with your administration to reduce aviation noise impacts.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me or Molly Harris, Acting Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Huerta", with a circled number "3" to the right.

Michael P. Huerta  
Administrator