

In fall 2018, Congress passed into law a new Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill, with a variety of new policy and funding authorizations. Among many areas of activity, the legislation included several studies and policies related to airplane noise and emissions.

While there are outstanding questions related to implementation of the new work, the most relevant related to Sea-Tac Airport are as follows:

- Sec. 173, which sets a one-year deadline for the FAA to complete the ongoing evaluation of alternative metrics to the current Day Night Level (DNL) 65 standard.
- Sec. 175, which requires the FAA to “consider the feasibility of dispersal headings or other lateral track variations” when proposing a new area navigation departure procedure or amending an existing procedure that would direct aircraft between the surface and 6,000 feet above ground level over noise sensitive areas.
- Sec. 179, which would study the relationship between jet aircraft approach and takeoff speeds and corresponding noise impacts on communities surrounding airports.
- Sec. 180, which would create a Regional Ombudsman for each FAA region to serve as a regional liaison with the public, including community groups, on issues regarding aircraft noise, pollution, and safety.
- Sec. 186, which would initiate a review of the potential benefits, costs, and other impacts that would result from a phaseout of covered stage 3 aircraft.
- Sec. 187, which sets a two-year deadline to complete the ongoing evaluation of alternative metrics to the current Day Night Level (DNL) 65 standard AND provide initial recommendations of proposed changes based on the findings.
- Sec. 188, which would evaluate alternative metrics to the current average day-night level standard, such as the use of actual noise sampling and other methods, to address community airplane noise concerns.
- Sec. 189, which would study the health impacts of noise from aircraft flights on residents in the metropolitan areas of Boston, Chicago, DC, New York, Northern California, Phoenix, Southern California and Seattle.
- Sec. 190, which would create a pilot grant program involving not more than 6 projects at airports for environmental mitigation projects that will measurably reduce or mitigate aviation impacts on noise, air quality, or water quality at the airport or within 5 miles of the airport.

In addition, U.S. Representative Adam Smith proposed two pieces of airplane noise and emissions legislation last year, and is considering a third for 2019:

- **The Protecting Airport Communities from Particle Emissions Act**, which would direct the FAA to report on ultrafine particles and their health impacts for communities around the 20 largest U.S. airports. The study would also analyze the potential impacts of mitigation options, emissions reductions, and the increased use of aviation biofuels.
- **The Aviation-Impacted Communities Act**, which would create an official federal designation of an “aviation impacted community” as “a community that is located not greater than 1 mile from any point at which a commercial or cargo jet route is 3,000 feet or less above ground level.” Through this designation, these communities would be able to work with the FAA to research potential flight operations or flight path changes and/or mitigation.
- **A secondary noise insulation package bill**, which would allow the FAA to fund a second residential noise insulation package in instances where the initial insulation fails.