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**PRESIDENT, SOMERVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

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July 11, 2017

Michael P. Huerta  
Administrator, Federal Aviation Administrator  
800 Independence Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta:

The Board of Aldermen of the City of Somerville has authorized me to send you this letter as a plea to ask for your direct intervention to address a severe noise problem that many of the residents of the City of Somerville suffer because of the decisions of your personnel in the control tower at Logan Airport in the assignment of departures from Runway 33L ("33L"). To be frank, many of our residents believe that the FAA has utterly failed to perform its obligations as required by the FAA Airport Compliance Manual – Order 5190 6B. 13.2.b.1. That provision unequivocally states that "[t]he federal government has the authority and responsibility to control aircraft noise by the regulation of source emissions, by flight operational procedures, and by management of the air traffic control system and navigable airspace in ways that minimize noise impact on residential areas, consistent with the highest standards of safety and efficiency." As described below, it is clear that the FAA is not meeting its responsibility to control aircraft noise in ways that minimize the noise impact on residential areas with regard to the assignment of departures on 33L.

This letter is not designed as a mere rehash of prior complaints that Somerville and many of its neighboring communities have raised with regard to the implementation of RNAV on departures from 33L at Logan. Instead, this letter documents that the assignment of departures from 33L during the months of May and June has placed an unfair noise burden on those living under its flights and this assignment process cannot be allowed to continue. Needless to say, for those poor souls who live under the flights departing from 33L, the RNAV system compounds the noise problem, since it narrows all flights into a narrow path. It is indisputable that the noise from these departing planes over Somerville will drown out ordinary conversation or television volumes indoors if windows are open. It is impossible to carry on conversations outdoors or for folks to use decks or backyards. Therefore, our residents subject to this noise from 33L departures cannot open their windows in the summer, especially during the evening and normal hours of sleep. Many will use air conditioning, even if unwarranted by the temperature, in an effort to drown out the noise from departing planes. As elected officials, our constituents have complained to us of the resulting impacts from these noise problems, including their inability to

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enjoy normal life in their homes and the inability of their families even to have a normal night of sleep.

We understand that under certain wind conditions, the control tower is required to assign 33L for departures. There are other times when there is substantial discretion. During May and June of this year, the control tower at Logan has assigned 33L for departures a vast majority of evenings with flights continuing until around midnight. Then, the same runway 33L has been assigned for departures continuing the next morning on a regular basis as early as 5:06 a.m. I have attached a detailed analysis showing the early morning and late evening departures from 33L during the months of May and June, 2017. During the month of May, Runway 33L was used for continuing evening departures until around midnight on 22 of 31 evenings. Then, the same runway was assigned for early morning takeoffs on 17 of 31 mornings, beginning sometimes as early as 5:08. During that month of May, there were 13 evenings when there were departures until approximately midnight from 33L followed immediately the next morning with departures from 33L between 5 to 6 a.m. Clearly, for almost one-half of the days in the month of May, there was less than a 6 hour break from the last evening flight until the next morning flight for those residents impacted by 33L departures.

This same pattern of the use of 33L for departures continued during the month of June. Runway 33L was used for evening departures until around midnight on 19 out of 30 evenings. The same runway was assigned for early morning departures on 21 out of 30 days, beginning as early as 5:07. During that month of June, there were 14 evenings when there were departures until approximately midnight from 33L followed immediately the next morning with departures from 33L between 5 to 6 a.m. So, just like the month of May, for almost one-half of the days of the month of June, there was less than a 6 hour break from the last evening flight until the next morning flight for those residents impacted by 33L departures. Some of these nights were quite problematic for airplane noise. For example, on the evening of May 31, from 33L there were 23 departures from 11:00 p.m. until midnight, followed by another 13 departures, from midnight until 12:42. Then, four and one-half hours later, beginning at 5:12 a.m., in the span of 3 minutes, from 33L three planes departed, followed by an additional 11 planes between 5:15 and 6 a.m.

This assignment of departures from 33L into the late evening followed by early morning departures is a deviation from the traditional assignment of runway usage during the months of May and June. When there are strong Northwest winds, such as during the fall and winter, 33L is used for departures. We do not know why this practice changed this spring. Many times, we have seen a switch to 33L after 11 p. m. for departures, even when there was a wind from the SW. It appears that a decision has been made to use 33L as the preferential runway for evening departures, even when not required by the wind. This does not make sense and is unfair, given the large number of people who are impacted by 33L departures. It especially does not make sense to follow these late night departures from 33L with early morning departures from the same runway. Perhaps it would make sense for sensitivity purposes to have personnel from the control tower or from the regional administration office to come to Somerville and witness firsthand the noise impact from 33L departures so that they could be sensitive to the noise that residents suffer when that runway is used. I think any logical or caring person would understand that relief should be given to folks so that they don't suffer from severe noise in the late evening and then the early morning for days on end. Therefore, we would certainly be willing to meet

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any of your personnel at the impacted areas in Somerville in an effort to directly communicate the experiences of our residents. Of course, we would not expect such personnel to come at midnight or 6:00 am when our residents experience this noise directly.

In summary, it appears that someone has made the decision to shift more departures onto 33L during the evening and early morning, even when not required by the prevailing winds. For the reasons discussed above, this poses an unfair burden on the health and welfare of those impacted. I thank you for your attention to this matter and all of our elected officials in Somerville stand ready to work with you to address this problem.

Very truly yours,

William A. White, Jr.