



UNITED STATES SENATE

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SENATORS JOHN McCAIN & JEFF FLAKE URGE SENATE & HOUSE COMMITTEES TO ADDRESS PHOENIX FLIGHT PATH CHANGES IN FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Jeff Flake (R-AZ) this week sent a letter to Senator John Thune (R-SD), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and Representative Bill Shuster (R-PA), Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, requesting that they include language in the upcoming Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill that would address concerns raised by residents of Phoenix, Arizona about recent flight path changes at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

“As your committees continue drafting legislation in the coming weeks to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) before the current authorization expires on March 31, 2016, we request that you include language in that bill to address serious concerns in Arizona caused by flight path changes around Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport,” **write Senators McCain and Flake.** “These changes were made without formal notification to the airport and without adequate opportunity for community engagement in the process. As a result, the new flight paths have had major, negative impacts on residents around the airport and the greater Phoenix area. While we continue to support the aims of NextGen to improve passenger safety and travel efficiency, it is imperative that the implementation process include the airports and communities ultimately affected by these flight path changes.”

The Senate recently unanimously agreed to this proposal filed by Senators McCain and Flake as an amendment to the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Bill. Specifically, the amendment would ensure that communities and airports have the

opportunity to fully engage with the FAA before future flight path changes are made. In addition, for communities that have been negatively impacted by recent flight path changes that have already been implemented, the amendment would create a process to review those changes and require the FAA to consult with airports to determine steps to mitigate the negative effects.

The recently enacted omnibus spending bill also includes a provision directing the FAA to take steps to address community concerns stemming from NextGen flight path changes like those at Phoenix Sky Harbor. Senator McCain sent a letter to FAA Administrator Huerta to underscore that the language is intended “to improve outreach to the community and airport, providing an opportunity for notification and consultation with the operator of an affected airport and the community before making future flight path decisions.”

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[Read the Senators' letter here.](#)