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May 11, 2015

The Honorable Ashton Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
Office of the Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary of Interior  
Department of Interior  
1849 C Street, NW Room 6156  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dr. Kevin Shepherd  
Chairman  
Federal Interagency Committee  
on Aviation Noise  
M.S.463  
NASA Langley Research Center  
Hampton, VA 23681

Dear Secretary Carter, Secretary Jewell, and Dr. Shepherd:

I write to you today to ask for your assistance in maintaining a strong and ready military and protecting one of the most pristine environments and soundscapes in the lower forty-eight states - the Olympic National Park. I believe these objectives are not mutually exclusive and would appreciate your support to inform our future cooperation on this subject.

Home to Naval Base Kitsap and a close neighbor of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, my District has hosted service members and their families for more than 100 years. While we strongly support the men and women in uniform and their families, we are also passionate about the natural environment that surrounds our community and protecting it for future generations.

Recent Department of the Navy environmental planning projects prompted comments from members of the public concerned about the potential impacts of military aircraft noise. I fully appreciate the long history of regional airspace use by the military services for training, including the Department of Defense (DoD) managed Olympic Military Operations Areas A and B over the West End of the Olympic Peninsula. This airspace has unique attributes which provide opportunity for DoD aviators to practice essential skills. I also share the concerns many members of our region have with the potential noise impact such flights may have on national park resources including the soundscape, wildlife, and wilderness and visitor use of Olympic National Park.

I understand the Navy and the National Park Service, both members of the Federal Interagency Committee on Aviation Noise (FICAN), have already initiated discussions concerning the potential for noise impacts on the Olympic National Park and I commend both agencies in advance for their efforts. I further understand that prior to this effort; the Navy, the most active user of the airspace in question, had conducted a noise study related to the National Environmental Policy Act, which was based on metrics and an analytical framework that is more commonly associated with community noise in urban settings and not appropriate for analyzing the impacts to a national park. Additionally, given the recent growth in both scientific research and peer reviewed literature, I am interested in revisiting the Navy's data and conclusions and incorporating that of the other services to ensure that we fully understand and appreciate the impact to national park resources.

I recognize the sensitivity concerning noise studies. To that end, I request the assistance of the FICAN to serve as a neutral third party, to provide recommendations concerning noise impact modeling and analysis, as well as best practices to mitigate observed noise issues without unduly impacting defense readiness. Please know that I do not intend to request that FICAN exceed its authority or purpose as the technical forum for coordinating aviation noise research and development nor interfere with agency policy and decision-making. I am confident that various options exist for reducing noise impacts from military training exercises. Surely, there is a solution that optimizes the need for realistic training and our responsibility to preserve our unique natural resources.

Out of a sincere interest in working with the environmental and defense communities to provide a baseline for the development of effective mitigation strategies, I respectfully request your cooperation with the following:

- Department of Defense - Provide existing Department of Defense noise models and data associated with aircraft operations above and around the Olympic National Park to the National Park Service and FICAN.
- National Park Service - Provide analyses of existing noise monitoring data to FICAN and the DOD. Through discussions with FICAN and DOD, identify objectives and then plan and conduct noise monitoring around the Olympic National Park.
- FICAN - review existing noise model results to assess the relevance of modeling scenarios; confirm that model inputs appropriately represent those scenarios (e.g., confirm that NoiseMap includes current aircraft models operating in the MOAs); evaluate potential limitations of the noise model (available input data, model structure); evaluate analyses of noise model outputs, noise exposure metrics and explore options for mitigation; identify potential objectives for onsite noise monitoring designed to complement existing noise model results and share results with the National Park Service; perform a technical review of the state of knowledge regarding effects of aircraft noise in areas specifically designated for the protection of wildlife, natural resource values, wilderness, cultural resources and visitor enjoyment; identify important knowledge gaps that could be the focus of future

research; FICAN will also explore the value of future on-site noise monitoring and recommend measurement protocols and site selection criteria.

I appreciate your cooperation in this important request. Your efforts to date and the information and assistance requested above will provide all interested parties with the opportunity to have an informed conversation concerning training mission requirements, existing and potential impacts of aircraft noise on the Olympic National Park, the species that inhabit it, and the outlying communities.

Please consider me a partner in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Derek Kilmer  
US Representative