

# **Resolution:**

## **Reduce the impacts of Navy Expansion and training in Northwestern Washington State**

**WHEREAS** the U.S. Navy conducts EA-18G Growler jet training flights from OLF Coupeville and Ault Field on Whidbey Island, over and near San Juan County, Jefferson County, Clallam County, Skagit County the North Cascades, the Olympic Mountains and throughout Northwest Washington; and

**WHEREAS** military jet noise has increased dramatically over Northwest Washington since the first Growlers arrived in 2008, and the Navy, having listed many surrounding communities including San Juan County, as areas of “No Significant Impact” from Growler noise, yet San Juan County residents have entered over 4,800 jet noise complaints on the County jet noise reporting map since May of 2014; and

**WHEREAS** military jet noise has been medically documented to seriously impact the health and quality of life of many residents in Northwest Washington; and

**WHEREAS** communities affected by jet noise from Ault Field and OLF Coupeville, including Whidbey Island, LaConner, San Juan County, Port Townsend, Sequim, Port Angeles, Forks and several Indian Reservations regularly measure noise levels that exceed thresholds for permanent hearing damage, often between 75 and 108 dBA inside their homes during Growler over-flights, Field Carrier Landing Practice and stationary engine run ups, that come in bursts lasting for hours and sometimes long after midnight; and

**WHEREAS** the historically quiet and pristine nature of Northwest Washington, with its marine protected areas, National Monuments and National Parks, National Forests, State Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, the Olympic Mountains and Cascade Mountains attract agriculture, outdoor recreation of all kinds, kayakers, sailors, tourists from around the world, (3 million to the Olympic National Park, 1 million to San Juan County) and are home to small communities that value the quiet rural, residential, agricultural, and marine environments of these lands; and

**WHEREAS** the current level of jet noise has affected real estate sales in San Juan County and Island County, forcing local realtors on Whidbey Island and San Juan County to add a military jet noise disclosure clause to property sales; and

**WHEREAS** the Navy did not begin a full Environmental Impact Statement on the Growlers until the Fall of 2013, five years after they were deployed, and to date, the EIS draft has not been issued and the Navy has done nothing to mitigate the noise from the Growlers – no baffles, no Hush House, no schedule of trainings at Ault Field which would help residents gain some control over their property; and

**WHEREAS** the Navy plans to turn the western portion of the Olympic Peninsula and surrounding waters into an Electromagnetic Warfare Range, flying 260 days per year, 8-16 hours per day, up to 153 of the loudest jets on the planet, capable of 150 decibels, over the famously quiet Olympic Peninsula; and

**WHEREAS** Navy SEALs will be doing combat training on 68+ beaches in Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Pacific Ocean beaches in Washington, unannounced and undisclosed to the public and to state, local and federal agencies; and

**WHEREAS** The Navy plans an unprecedented expansion of sonar and explosive activities in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the waters off Indian Island, Puget Sound, and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, which

consists of 2,408 square nautical miles of Olympic Peninsula coastline, in which the mid-frequency sonar systems the Navy employs are capable of generating sounds in excess of 235 decibels; and

**WHEREAS** The Navy estimates hundreds of thousands of marine mammals would be killed or harmed within the vast militarized sonar and explosive training zones in Northwest Washington waters, and the 5-year Letter of Authorization issued to the Navy by NOAA allows an unsustainable number of more than 1.2 million takes of marine mammal species alone, many of which are to be harassed multiple times;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the San Juan County Democrats, call on the Washington State Congressional Delegation to work with the Navy to

- (1) **Take immediate steps** to reduce the impact of the Growler noise and training in Northwest Washington, including:
  - a. Change procedures to **require** Growlers to delay lowering landing gear to reduce noise until the jets are over water near the airfield unless specific safety concerns are identified
  - b. Eliminate the use of afterburners except when required for take off.
  - c. Reposition the aircraft or install mitigation infra structure to reduce the noise impact of stationary engine run-up activity for communities around Ault Field.
  - d. Restore the practice of publishing the Growler training schedules Ault Field so that neighboring communities can regain some control over the use of their property. Ault Field conducts 14 – 16 thousand Field Carrier Landing practices annually – each takeoff uses afterburners.
  - e. **Prohibit aggressive flying** over and near civilian communities and public lands renowned for pristine quiet; this includes dogfighting, flying below minimum altitudes, use of afterburners, and sonic booms.
  - f. **Create an emergency notification system** for communities when fuel or chaff dumps from aircraft occur, as fuel dumps do about once a month, according to an active-duty Navy pilot, and chaff dumps are expected to see a 72% increase according to the NWTT EIS. Chaff is small enough to be inhaled or swallowed, and each cylinder contains millions of heavy metal-coated glass fibers. Notify people to stay in their homes or cars until an all-clear signal is given.
- (2) **Do Not increase the number of Growlers stationed at NAS Whidbey** until the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is completed and the Record of Decision is published after a full and comprehensive public comment period as allowed by law. **Do NOT allow use of directed energy weapons** such as lasers, microwaves and other devices, over civilian populated areas or public lands where citizens recreate and could be unknowingly exposed to harmful radiation. **Do NOT allow electronic warfare mobile emitters** to conduct electronic warfare training on public roads such as the Hood Canal Road, Route 101 and the Hoh River Road, where civilians might be unknowingly exposed.
- (3) **Fully consider ALL alternatives** to basing all Growlers at NAS Whidbey in the ongoing EIS, as the Growler mission is not here but at Lemoore Naval Air Station in California, conveniently near the Naval Air Base at Fallon, Nevada, which uses lands already owned by the Department of Defense.
- (4) **Require that similar marine species protections that were enacted** for the Hawaiian and Southern California ranges be extended for all marine mammal species in Northwest Washington, and that the timing and location of training of at-sea training not be during peak times of animal activity in migratory corridors and feeding/nursing areas. Require that independent observers accompany all Navy vessels for the duration of any and all training exercises.
- (5) **Do not commence seagoing activities until** the legally mandated endangered species consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service has been completed and disclosed to the public, along with the permit required by law for incidental take of endangered birds and fish, and until the legally mandated consultation with the State of Washington on cultural and historic properties, that was prematurely terminated by the Navy in November 2015 despite a written request from the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, is completed to the satisfaction of the State Historic Preservation Officer.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the Washington State Congressional Delegation along with a request for response within thirty days, listing the actions they are willing to take to support this resolution, or a list of the reasons explaining why it cannot be supported.

Submitted by XXXXXXXX to the San Juan County Democrats for consideration at the San Juan County Democratic Convention to be held on May 1, 2016 in Friday Harbor.

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Signature					
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