

October, 2015

Dear Representative Larsen,

I am again writing you about noise from jets on Whidbey Island. A great deal of recent scientific research concerning noise and sound in the surrounding environment indicates clearly that the effects of noise on health are similar to the effects of many other forms of pollution. Effects of noise pollution are profound, whether they are distant or immediate. The duration, quality, and vibrational level of noise are as important as the volume. Noise affects all of us, whether we hear it or not, whether we experience it as painful or not. Just as some sounds can be instantaneously calming, other qualities of sound can be instantaneously shattering. The effects of these experiences don't have to reach the level of awareness to be profound nonetheless. The effects can be insidious and cumulative.

The noise from the jets on Whidbey Island is dreadful, in the literal sense of the word dread-full. The noise shatters calm, shatters all other sounds of the environment. Even in our busy modern world, we rely on sounds from the environment for vital and meaningful information, coming to us all the time from our surroundings, both near and far. It is in our genetic heritage to be attuned to sound and to be responsive to sound. We respond, consciously or not, to sounds such as those from the jets, with dread and alarm. It is medically well established that this causes a cascade stress response within us which can contribute negatively to all manner of health problems. A stress reaction to which we can respond meaningfully is entirely different from a stress response that is ongoing and outside our ability to affect or escape. This creates a situation conducive to illness, to aggravating other pre-existing medical conditions, and interrupts that which is required for health and healing.

Studies about noise in the environment are ongoing and current. Scientific findings support and confirm individuals' experience of the very harmful effects of noise on health and well being. It is recognized globally that noise of this sort is one of the terrible impacts of war. It is wrong to allow noise of this sort to destroy the quality our daily lives. Please take an immediate and forward-looking approach to form proactive policy concerning noise in the environment. The devastating noise from the jets on Whidbey Island has truly destroyed the quality of life on San Juan Island.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Woodbridge

Friday Harbor, WA