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**Quietskies**

**Over San Juan County**

**Update: September, 2015**

**Greetings:**

After three weeks of huge noise (August 10 - 31) we seem to be in a slightly quieter space. I've been looking at the past 8 months to see what progress we've made with the Growler issue.

**Two things stand out.**

1. REAL ESTATE DISCLOSURES: In response to increased noise, Lopez and some San Juan Island Realtors have included the following disclosure on Form 17, the Seller Disclosure Statement for Improved Property: "All SJC properties may be affected by aircraft noise from Whidbey Island Naval Air Station".

2. REPRESENTATIVE RICK LARSEN has been responsive to San Juan County while maintaining a firm position of supporting the expansion of NASWI into a Premiere Base. In December of 2014 he sent out his long-term strategy for addressing the impacts Growler noise in our region. (The full text begins on page 3 of this Update.) He says he is exploring the following ideas with the Navy:

A) Reducing noise from engine testing by building a Hush House.

B) Reducing engine noise by adding chevrons which could muffle jet noise without sacrificing engine performance.

C) Reducing future flights by using software which could reduce the amount of training pilots need before deploying to a carrier.

D) Expanded sound monitoring which would include adding sound measurements in San Juan County to the current Environmental Impact Statement.

E) Growler Schedule for Ault Field. This would help us to plan around the relentless noise of Field Carrier Landing Practice which goes on and on for hours at a time.

F) Improved use of data by the Navy from the San Juan County jet noise website.

**AT THIS POINT THESE ARE ONLY IDEAS. We need to push Representative Larsen and Senators Cantwell and Murray to TRANSFORM THESE IDEAS INTO REALITY.**

**ACTION: Please consider writing regular letters asking for progress reports.**

RIGHT NOW SAN JUAN COUNTY IS COLLATERAL DAMAGE FOR THE GROWLER MISSION - LET'S CHANGE THAT!

Legislator's contact information is on the Quiet Skies Website: www.quietskies.info

**Other notes:**

Check out this link for a close up look at the Growler. Consider how compatible this mission is for San Juan County.

Boeing's advertisement for Growlers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSK-JcK1MTc

Thanks for all you do!

cynthia

*Go to Page 3 for Rep. Larsen's response to jet noise.*

Sent out 12/16/2014

Letter from Representative Rick Larsen

While I remain steadfast in my support for Naval Air Station Whidbey Islands (NASWI) role as one of the country's premier Navy installations, the Growlers being stationed at the base, and the necessary training such as field carrier landing practice to make sure our servicemen and women are prepared, I have also listened and understand you have concerns about jet noise impacts on your health and quality of life. I am working to address the impact of noise in our community, while ensuring that NASWI and our servicemen and women are prepared for their future missions.

I have been working with local officials, community members and the Navy to find ways to mitigate the effects of the noise on communities across the north Puget Sound region. Here are some of the ideas that we are exploring as a broad, long-term strategy to address the noise.

Reducing Noise Coming from Engine Testing. Engine tests on the ground at Ault Field can be heard from places on North Whidbey Island and across the water in the Southwest portions of the San Juan Islands. While some Navy facilities have specially designed hangars to muffle noise from these activities, NASWI does not. Senator Patty Murray and I recently asked the Navy to fund the construction of a 'hush house' at Ault Field. You can read our letter here: http://1.usa.gov/1Ahu9vt.

Reducing Engine Noise. Ongoing research may produce attachments to Growler engines, called chevrons, that could muffle jet noise without sacrificing engine performance. I have been tracking the development of this technology and will be monitoring the results of the first flight testing, which will take place in 2015.

Reducing Future Flights. Navy engineers are currently developing a software package for the Growler that could improve pilot safety and reduce the amount of training pilots would need before deploying to a carrier. While it is still several years from being operational, my staff and I have received multiple briefings on the process and will continue to monitor its development.

Expanded Sound Monitoring. The Navy is conducting noise measurements on Whidbey Island as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. Jet noise affecting residents on the San Juan Islands is not being measured in the newly expanded EIS. I will work with the Navy to see if it is possible to conduct sound measurements in the islands to be considered in the EIS.

Growler Schedule for Ault Field. NASWI currently publishes a weekly schedule of Growler Field Carrier Landing Practices (FCLPs) at Outlying Field Coupeville. At a recent local meeting, community members suggested that the Navy also publish a schedule for FCLP at Ault Field to try to give people affected by jet noise from Ault Field this same advanced notice. I have shared this recommendation with the Navy and will let the community know about any decisions made regarding this proposal.

Improved Use of Data. Residents on the San Juan Islands experience jet noise, and officials from San Juan County have proactively addressed citizens' concerns by setting up a database for people to report noise.\*\* This database will be a valuable resource for the Navy, and I am working to facilitate communication between the community and the Navy to ensure data are collected in a way that is maximally useful to all parties.

Not all of these are immediate solutions, and this list will evolve over time, but these are all good ideas worth exploring as part of a broad strategy. I welcome other ideas that people may have, and I look forward to listening and working with the community and local leaders to address the impact of EA-18G Growler noise while preserving NASWI's role as one of the country's preeminent Navy bases.

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\*\* Editor's Note: For tips on using the County's website for noise reports, go to

http://www.quietskies.info/#!contacts/c136u