

Agreement Reached on Airplane Noise Monitoring -- June 15, 2006

Delaware Delegation Brokers Deal Among DeIDOT, Airport and FAA

Wilmington, DE (June 15, 2006) - Delaware's congressional delegation - Sens. Joe Biden, Tom Carper and Rep. Michael Castle - recently brokered an agreement with Delaware's Department of Transportation and Philadelphia Airport (PHL) officials to install a permanent noise monitoring system in northern Delaware. This system will be used to gather concrete data on the actual noise levels experienced by residents living near the Philadelphia Airport.

According to the agreement, which was reached last week, Philadelphia Airport will purchase, maintain and monitor the equipment, but DeIDOT will establish the location where the equipment will be installed. If all goes well, it should take between two-to-three months for the equipment to be ordered, received and then installed.

Residents of the state of Delaware, particularly those living in Brandywine Hundred, Arden and Claymont, have expressed ongoing frustration with the noise caused by airplanes flying over their homes, and with plans for the Philadelphia Airport to expand. Those residents fear that any expansion will result in an increase in air traffic and associated noise. Up until this point, there has been no accurate way to determine current noise levels.

"This new system will help us get a better handle on the situation and hopefully help everyone involved - from the FAA to the Philadelphia Airport to the residents of northern Delaware - develop solutions to mitigate the noise problem," said the delegation. "We understand our constituents' concerns and have been working hard on their behalf. This is not an issue that can be settled in a week, month, or year, and we know that is frustrating. We are looking forward to continued success working with the FAA, the Philadelphia Airport, DeIDOT, and the Action Group as we move forward on this issue."

Under the current noise-monitoring system, every five years, the FAA requires Philadelphia Airport to conduct a study of the noise caused by airplanes in the neighborhoods surrounding the airport. In order to assess the situation in Delaware, the airport places a noise monitor in northern Delaware for a few days. They then take the results and average it over a period of several days to determine a constant noise level for the area.

However, residents have complained that the noise problem is not constant and that two-to-three times a week, they experience extreme noise for several hours - a fact that would be missed under the current monitoring scheme.

A permanent noise-monitoring program, like the one agreed to last week, will help better define the impact of air traffic on Delaware neighborhoods so that residents and Delaware officials can better work with the FAA and the Philadelphia Airport to address the specific cause of noise. For example, time of day and weather conditions will be considered when reviewing noise data to monitor severity and determine what measures might be taken to improve the situation.

