

June 29, 2016, Mountain View, CA

Quiet Skies NorCal address to the Select Committee for South Bay Arrivals



People who follow these things will tell you that what we've achieved in the bay area, in terms of commitment and involvement of the elected, and level of dialog with the FAA, **is unprecedented.**

The trigger for this achievement was in January, when a woman named Cheryl Poland put together a series of summit meetings and showed to the elected that **people from across the region** can support a **single unified ask**. Not everybody signed up, but a **critical mass** was clearly there. Before the summits, I'll remind you, it was **every town for itself**.

This was quickly followed by Anna Eshoo and Sam Farr's call to action: "*If we're to be successful,*" they said, "*We must create **regional solutions.***" At that point, Quiet Skies NorCal was formed.

Our proposal covers almost 20 cities, but we represent no single city. **We have gathered over 1000 endorsements** for our plan, even though the plan carries no city flag.

Not surprisingly, our endorsements are distributed **equally** between the Mid-Pen area, the Santa Cruz area, and the high elevation mountain communities in between.

We have endorsers who live in the mountains **right under the old BSUR track**, because they are still close enough to SERFR to be affected by it. **They trust us**, that when we restore the flight path, we will also make sure it is as quiet as it used to be.

That trust is there for a reason. Our solution development process was **transparent and open for anyone to participate in** – consisting of a series of workshops to which **all** groups were invited and most attended. Naturally, and unlike others, we have also publically posted every proposal we've advocated for. No secrets. **We earned their trust.**

As you recall, our summit meeting in Los Altos last month consisted of an open forum discussion, and **all voices were given a stage**, whether supportive of our plan or not. By being transparent and inclusive, I hope we've earned **your** trust.

Our trust and support extend **throughout the Metroplex**, and this support is for a plan that is **actionable, regional**, and considered **feasible** by the FAA.

The Mid-Pen activists are opposing our plan. However, their consensus letter is full of items that are either **technically impossible**, or **morally wrong**. Grand promises are easy to sell, but they are **useless if they are not feasible**.

When closely inspected, **their plan proposes to move SERFR eastward**, directly over Mountain View, Sunnyvale, and Cupertino. I doubt that these cities agreed to this plan, so the plan is **hardly a consensus, and there is nothing regional about it.**

These are activists that are so captivated by the prospect of shifting the traffic over **other** cities, that they firmly resist feasible proposals that greatly benefit their **own** cities. They are doing their communities a huge disservice by dragging them down a **dead-end path.**

Their plan inevitably takes us back to where we were 7 months ago. A huge number of one-man advocacy groups playing musical chairs while making no progress towards a solution. A bunch of cities trying to gang up on another bunch of cities. **Back to what we see in other Metroplexes.**

Quiet Skies NorCal presented you with an **actionable proposal** that improves the lives of **all** communities in the south bay. It might not solve **all** of the noise problems in the region, but it certainly solves the **NextGen**-related problems, since these have had the most severe impact, are easily identifiable, and easily fixable.

The solution set is not terribly creative. It is based on the simple idea that to the greatest extent possible we should restore the flight environment to what it was before March 2015.

There are three reasons for this.

- **First**, we know that the NextGen transition caused a very large increase in complaints in each and every city represented here, so restoring to a “known good” state is by definition an **improvement for all**, and carries the **least risk of unintended consequences.**
- **Second**, we respect historical flight tracks. People who haven’t bought a house under a flight path should not be gifted with one. The affected residents filed their protest within **hours or days**, so have every right to demand to **“put it back”** without it being considered as “moving noise”. We simply ask to undo last year’s move. **We’re not taking it anywhere it wasn’t already at.**
- **Third**, in absolute terms, the old flight path affected less people, especially in high elevation communities. It is objectively a better path, and not by accident – it was designed that way. BSUR avoided as much population as possible in both the Santa Cruz mountains and in the Mid-Pen area. **It does not overfly SLV or Happy Valley or Summit**, and makes best use of the **Stanford Industrial Park near Los Altos.**

The punch line here is very simple: “It should **NOT** have been moved to begin with, we all realize this now, the FAA says it’s ok to put it back, so... please, **put it back.**”

However, “**put it back**” is not just about flight tracks. It is also about descent profiles.

You’ve heard from Mid-Pen and SLV that they would have been **fine** with restoring the ground track, but that they are **concerned** that the new OPD procedure will be as noisy as SERFR is today.

Interestingly, both groups have also said that you should not rely on laymen for solutions, but rely on the FAA, who have the best minds in the world working on this, and know what they’re doing.

So here’s what **the FAA** have to say about OPD and SERFR:

FIRST, OPD is designed to be the quietest way to fly an airplane. It is based on **idle-power descent**, just like BSUR was. In fact, the end-to-end slope of the old BSUR arrival over the peninsula happens to **precisely match** the FAA’s guideline for OPD. So OPD is simply a **streamlined version of the same practices that made BSUR quiet**. OPD is a part of NextGen, and is mentioned in the feasibility report over 30 times so the FAA is clearly committed to it.

SECOND, (the FAA says) SERFR is noisy not because OPD is noisy, but because OPD is not followed, due to specific well-understood design flaws. When the ground track is shifted back, the flaws will be addressed and OPD **will** be followed, so what’s happening today over the SERFR track cannot and will not keep happening.

THIRD, and most important: Glen Martin entered this enterprise by **establishing mutual trust** with representatives Eshoo, Farr and Speier. Glen does not want them in his office next year demanding answers. Thinking that Glen is promising a quiet route and is then going to pull a fast one on us and split, is paranoid. If Glen secretly wanted to leave us with a noisy and inefficient arrival, well, he’s already got one.

SLV’s stance, when unmasked, is simply “move it as far away from us as possible”, and that’s no different from Sky Posse’s “move SERFR eastwards” concept, with the exception that Palo Alto at least has a legitimate noise problem.

SLV, on the other hand, is not overflowed by either the **new** or the **old** ground tracks, has **never** had a noise issue, and there’s no reason to think that it ever **will**.

Meanwhile, the impact on the **Happy Valley corridor**, **Summit area** and the **mid-pen cities** is real and absolutely devastating.

Once again the punch line is simple: “The OPD concerns are false. **Please put the track back where it belongs.**”

We're not asking for some arbitrary change to today's state of affairs. **The baseline is March 2015** and it should **never** have been changed. We filed protest **immediately**, and now that it's ruled "feasible", undoing the change should be **the default action**. Any attempt to paint the solution as a "new flight path" is misleading. The initial move should **not** have happened, it was a **mistake**, and it should be rectified as soon as possible.

If your life got worse on March 2015, no matter where you live, you should support our solution.

Quiet Skies NorCal asks the select committee to adopt the "restore" guiding principle, and to recommend our solution set as presented to you, except for those parts deemed non-feasible by the FAA.

We further ask for continued access to the FAA in order to address unsolved problems, since while the NextGen issues have to be solved, they are not the whole of the story.

More information

This page: www.QuietSkiesNorCal.org/sc-address

All about SERFR: www.QuietSkiesNorCal.org/SERFR

All about BRIXX: www.QuietSkiesNorCal.org/BRIXX

All about OPD: www.QuietSkiesNorCal.org/OPD

Sky Snopes: www.QuietSkiesNorCal.org/sky-snopes

Solution set: www.QuietSkiesNorCal.org/solutions

Talk to us: www.QuietSkiesNorCal.org/talk-to-us

Glossary

SERFR: New arrival route into SFO. Noisy.

BSUR: Old arrival route into SFO. Quiet. ("BIG SUR")

BRIXX: New arrival route into SJC. Noisy.

OPD: Optimal Profile Descent. Quiet.

Idle Power: "Flying in Neutral". Quiet.

Glen Martin: Western Pacific Regional Administrator in the FAA. Good Guy.

Our Mission:

To bring together the FAA, airports, airlines and the affected public to develop solutions for decreasing the impact of jet noise on residents' lives.

Our Goals:

- Undo the increase in noise impact that accompanied the NextGen transition.
- Decrease the noise impact of legacy airspace design.
- Create a working relationship with the FAA, airports and airlines in order to maintain our quality of life.

Our Approach:

- Educate and inform the FAA about the noise abatement requirements of NorCal communities.
- Educate and inform the public about the FAA's roles and constraints.
- Find ways to use FAA's NextGen technology in order to reduce noise impact.
- Work with all stakeholders and develop community-driven solutions for noise problems.