Aviation Noise: Federal Actions
Authorizing and funding the FAA

Congress authorizes and funds operations of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

The most recent authorization, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, extends the FAA’s funding and authorities through Fiscal Year 2023.
FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018

Subtitle D included 22 sections related to airport noise and environmental issues, including:

- Sec. 173: Alternative airplane noise metric evaluation deadline
- Sec. 174: Updating airport noise exposure maps
- Sec. 175: Addressing Community Noise Concerns
- Sec. 179: Airport noise mitigation and safety study
- Sec. 180: Regional Ombudsmen
- Sec. 187: Aircraft noise exposure
- Sec. 188: Study regarding day-night average sound levels
- Sec. 189: Study on potential health and economic impacts of overflight noise
- Sec. 192: Zero-emission vehicles and technology
FAA’s Noise Thresholds

FAA uses the DNL (day-night average) noise *metric* and the 65 dB noise *threshold* for:

1. FAA **goals for reducing noise exposure**.

2. Compatible **land use guidelines** and eligibility for **noise mitigation funding** (within the 65 DNL contour) under the Aviation Safety and Noise Abatement Act of 1979 (ASNA) and 14 CFR Part 150

3. Determining significant **environmental impacts** under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)
Lowering Noise Thresholds

1. The FAA has existing regulatory authority to set the threshold.
   ◦ 2018 Reauthorization directed FAA to reevaluate use of the DNL metric and the 65 dB DNL threshold and report to Congress.
   ◦ This study is complete and currently in review.

2. Congress could lower the threshold by legislation.
   ◦ Reps. Sherman, Schiff cosponsored the *Decrease Noise Level (DNL)* Act to lower the threshold to 60 dB immediately, 55 dB within 10 years.

3. Local *communities and airports* can agree to use a separate, lower threshold than 65 DNL for purposes of land use guidelines.
Government Accountability Office (GAO)

The Government Accountability Office (GAO):
- Nonpartisan, independent watchdog agency
- Independent experts with broad authority to investigate and audit federal agencies
GAO Investigation of NextGen

Reps. Schiff and Sherman led a request in June

GAO will investigate whether FAA adequately:

- measures noise,
- mitigates impacts, and
- conducts public outreach

GAO will also make recommendations