



# Madison Teachers Inc.

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Jeff Knight, Executive Director



September 27, 2022

Dane County Executive Joe Parisi  
City County Building, Room 421  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703

Subject: MTI Request for Improvements  
Dane County Regional Airport Part 150 Noise Abatement Study

Dear County Executive Parisi:

As you know, MTI represents nearly 2,700 teachers and professional educators dedicated to the care and education of the children in our community. As the Dane County Regional Airport updates its Part 150 noise plan, we think it is essential that it address the impact to children, especially those from low-income areas or families of color living with the noise created by airport operations, including current and proposed fighter jet training by the Wisconsin Air National Guard.

It is our understanding that last spring the county airport began updating this plan which is necessary to address the impacts of the noise from the incoming F-35 jets at Truax Field. We are concerned that the decision to station these more powerful jets in Madison did not adequately consider opposing voices, including resolutions by the Madison Common Council, our School Board and numerous other public organizations.

The Air Force decision also ignored the findings of the project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which showed that Truax was one of two sites where *"there will be disproportionate impacts to low income and minority populations, as well as children."* The EIS showed that Truax would experience the greatest environmental impacts of all sites under consideration, and it did not include the noise and safety impacts on roughly 60,000 residents living within 3 miles of Truax. We are concerned this project will further promote environmental injustice and environmental racism in our community.

There has not been enough public involvement in the noise study procedures and there is concern that the county airport will only do the *bare minimum required* to meet federal FAA requirements. For example, if the study only considers the daily *average* noise level it will not provide meaningful information to help understand negative impacts to our community from peak noise levels. ***We are seeking a more robust study to be conducted which helps understand noise impacts on children, teachers, and schools near the county airport and its flight paths.***

We request that the following improvements be made to the study:

- The study should estimate noise impacts on all schools on the north and east sides of Madison. At this time, it is our understanding that no schools are to be included in the study.
- The study should estimate peak noise levels at all schools on the north and east sides of Madison. At this time, it will only predict daily average noise levels, not the peak noise levels we actually hear. Even the Air Force EIS evaluated peak noise levels at select locations.



- The study should estimate the impacts on educational performance and children's health. Peter Bingham, Professor of Neurology and Chief of the Pediatric Neurology Division at the University of Vermont Medical Center, explained the effects of noise from F-35 fighter jets on children which included: decreased reading skills; increased risk of mortality due to heart attack; increased anxiety and depression; increased attention problems; and, increased aggressive behavior.<sup>1</sup>
- Extend the study area at least 5 miles from the center of the airport.
- The study should estimate impacts at lower levels than 65 decibels. Predicting at lower levels will include more households and children that live on the north and east sides of Madison who are exposed to airport noise (e.g. 60 db is used by the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and 55 db is required by the State of Oregon).
- The study should identify the number of low-income and families of color living in neighborhoods that surround the airport to assess their noise impact levels. Even the Air Force EIS identified environmental justice impacts by assessing the number of low-income and families of color directly affected by jet noise.
- The study should provide a transparent process including meetings with impacted neighborhoods and schools to explain the study procedures and results. At this time, only one open house at the airport has been conducted and only one more is anticipated.

After noise impacts are estimated and it comes time to evaluate noise abatement measures, we have the following requests:

- Provide improvements at all schools on the north and east sides of Madison including funding for air conditioning systems and their operating costs. At this time, there is no noise abatement plan for area schools as part of this project.
- Implement a flight tracking system to identify the flight paths of commercial and Air National Guard planes so any significant impacts on our schools can be identified.
- Install a noise monitoring system, similar to that for the Burlington Airport, which includes area schools, so we can assess actual noise exposure. At this time, the study will predict noise levels through computer modeling with *no plans to measure actual noise levels*.

We know you share our appreciation for our children, teachers and schools which is why we ask that you advocate a thorough and informative noise study and abatement plan for the Part150 study. Those who will be most negatively impacted by the noise pollution caused by the F-35 jets will be families of color, especially those in economic distress, living and going to school near the airport.

Thank you in advance for using your position and resources to help protect our children.

Sincerely,

Madison Teachers Inc.

Jeff Knight	Michael Jones
Executive Director	President

cc: Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway  
 Madison Common Council  
 Dane County Supervisors  
 Airport Director Kimberly Jones  
 Airport Part150 Study  
 Madison School Board