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Jacqueline Munro
PO Box 4305
West Sedona, AZ 86340

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
DOCKET SECTION
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August 23, 1999

U.S. Department of Transportation Dockets
Docket No. [FAA-99-5926] -20
400 Seventh Street, SW.
Washington, DC 20590

Attention U.S. Dept. of Transportation:

I would like to submit the following comments related to Docket No. [FAA-99-59261 and the special operating rules for air tour flights in the Grand Canyon:

- The FAA is consistently failing to meet the mandate to “substantially restore the natural quiet” in the 1987 law. The agency should follow the law.
- The FAA should require the removal of all flights below the rim.
- The FAA has allowed the noise to get worse at the Canyon. The number of air tours has doubled from 50,000 annually in 1987 to around 120,000 now. The FAA should both reduce and cap the number of air tours to at least 1987 levels to achieve the natural quiet that the law mandates.
- The FAA proposal of 41% of the Park quiet for 75% of the day falls short of even the weak Park standard of 50% of the Park quiet for 75% of the day. This will not allow for true restoration of the natural quiet. Substantial restoration of natural quiet would only be achieved through much more severe restrictions than those proposed. A more realistic figure for making a significant reduction in noise would be 75% of the Park quiet for 100% of the time.
- The FAA should close the Dragon Corridor. This corridor impacts the Hermit, Boucher, Waldron, and Tonto trails.
- The FAA proposal would wrap tour flights closer around the south side of Point Sublime. This is an unacceptable way to treat visitor experience at such a spectacular and noted backcountry vista site, one the Park’s own management plan says will be a future focus of increased North Rim visitation.
- The Grand Canyon is one of the naturally quietest places on Earth. It is a place where visitors expect to get in touch with nature and enjoy the “natural quiet,” and to escape much of the noise of civilization. They should not have to listen to aircraft up to every three minutes as occurs in many locations. Quiet deserves as much protection as other park resources.
- Flight-free zones need to be large or they do not work. The FAA should demand larger flight-free zones in order to protect areas like Marble Canyon and the Powell Plateau.
- Over 94% of Grand Canyon National Park is proposed wilderness; it should sound like a wilderness.
- The FAA should require all air tours at the Canyon to use the quietest aircraft.

Sincerely,



“Jacqueline S. Munro