

August 23, 1999

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U.S. Department of Transportation Dockets
Docket No. (FAA99-5926)-19
400 Seventh Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DOCKET SECTION

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Dear Sirs,

How can an agency of the federal government consistently ignore a law passed by the Congress of that same federal government?

And get away with it?

I refer to the 1987 law that requires the FAA to "substantially restore the natural quiet" at the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

The numbers show that there are, today, around 120,000 air flights over the Canyon annually. When the law was passed, in 1987, that number was around 50,000.

Is that a way to "restore the natural quiet?"

And some of those flights go below the rim on their sightseeing jaunts. How quiet can they be?

The National Park Service has set a standard (although a weak one) of limiting aircraft noise in 50% of the Park to only 25% of the day, with no noise limits in the other 50% of the Park at any time!

Despite the weakness of that standard, the FAA - which is proposing to amend special operating rules for flights over the Grand Canyon - will not even meet the Park Service's requirements! The FAA says it will be okay if only 41% of the Park is noisy 25% of the day. The rest of the Park - 59% of its space - can be noisy 100% of the time!

How can the FAA get away with such disregard for the law that Congress passed in 1987? Are they getting paid off by the flight operators?

Is the profit-and-loss statement of the tour operators so important to the United States that they can be allowed to flout the good sense that says the Grand Canyon, and other national parks, can be damaged by noise pollution that adversely affects millions of visitors who come each year to see the beauty, walk the trails, hear the sounds of nature, experience the quietness of a remote site?

Please: tell the FAA to follow the law, make the Grand Canyon quiet once more, reduce the number of overflights, and limit where they can go.

Sincerely,

Don Braman

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