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Docket Management Facility
US Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Nassif Building, Rm. PL-401
Washington, DC 20590-001

RE: 14 CFR Parts 36 and 91
 Docket No. FAA 2003-16526; Notice No. 03-12 ("the Notice")
 RIN 2120-AH99
 Stage 4 Aircraft Noise Standards
 Agency: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA/DOT)

SUMMARY: "The FAA is proposing a new noise standard for subsonic jet airplanes and subsonic transport category large airplanes. This noise standard, Stage 4, would apply to any person submitting an application for a new airplane type design on and after January 1, 2006. The standard could be chosen voluntarily prior to that date."

COMMENT: As a community volunteer who has worked on environmental issues relating to Lawrence G. Hanscom Field Airport ("Hanscom Airport") abutting my town, Lexington, Massachusetts, on behalf of HATS (Hanscom Area Towns Committee), I would like to applaud a proposal for the adoption of tougher standards by the FAA. However, I believe the Proposed Rulemaking does not extend far enough. The Notice states that "the FAA has no current plan to begin the phaseout of Stage 3 airplanes" (The Notice, page 7).

Therefore, I urge that the proposed rules be expanded to phase out Stage 2 and Stage 3 jets as soon as possible. The Notice mentions that "the most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain reasons for recommended change, and include specific supporting data."

At Hanscom Airport there has been an onslaught of jet activity, particularly business and time-share jets. We have gone from 11,000 jet operations in 1995 to 30,788 jet operations in 2002. This dramatic increase is apparently to overcome security checks and delays at larger airports, and provide faster boarding facilities to business people who are admitted into their rented or owned jets by the service providers without delay (and usually even without luggage checks). This selfish and fuel-consuming, growing jet activity, and the noise it generates, affects the neighboring Minute Man National Historical Park (MMNHP), as well as our suburban community residences. A "Last Chance" designation was made for the area surrounding Hanscom Field by Scenic America on 24 February 2003. The environmentally sensitive character of the area around Hanscom Airport was further affirmed in June 2003 by the designation of this area as "One of the Ten Most Endangered Areas in the country" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. So, the impact of airport noise is a national issue.

While the airport discourages operations between 11 PM and 7 AM with special fines, nighttime operations have increased significantly from 3.6 operations per night in 1995 to 2,170 (or 6 per night) in the year 2002, because the fines are

too low to discourage the private jet users. According to the Boeing web site http://www.boeing.com/commercial/noise/laurence_hanscom.html Hanscom Airport has no restrictions on Stage 2 or Stage 3 operations.

Those of us who have followed the situation believe that Stage 2 and Stage 3 aircraft need to be phased out as soon as possible, or the MMNHP and the local historical sites and residence will continue being exposed to excessive aviation noise for the selfish convenience of a few privileged individuals.

The FAA needs to step in and change the rules to protect people and resources next to the non-hub airports such as Hanscom Field.

In conclusion, the proposed Docket should be amended to include the phase-out of Stage 2 and Stage 3 jets as soon as possible. Otherwise the proposed Docket will prove to be somewhat meaningless for those near Hanscom Field.

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