

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
oag.dc.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, May 10, 2016



Contact: Rob Marus, Communications Director: (202) 724-5646; robert.marus@dc.gov
Andrew Phifer, Public Affairs Specialist: (202) 741-7652; andrew.phifer@dc.gov

Attorney General Racine Asks FAA to Reconsider New Flight Paths that Create Early-Morning Noise in District

Paths Implemented Last Year Take Planes Directly over Neighborhoods and Schools

WASHINGTON, D.C. –Attorney General Karl A. Racine has sent a letter to leaders of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) asking them to reconsider newly implemented flight paths that bring planes taking off to the north from Washington National Airport low over residential neighborhoods in Wards 2 and 3 -- sometimes at early-morning hours. The new flight patterns shifted such air traffic east of the Potomac River.

“These new flight paths, implemented in 2015, permit aircraft departing Reagan National to the north to fly over Foggy Bottom, Georgetown University, Canal Road, and MacArthur Boulevard,” Attorney General Racine wrote in the letter, addressed to FAA Administrator Michael Huerta and FAA Eastern Region Administrator Carmine Gallo. **“The District residents in those areas have been seriously and adversely affected by the aircraft noise from these new flight paths.”**

Neighbors and institutions in the area have expressed concern to officials about the new flight paths for months, and several District officials – including Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton – have raised the issue with federal leaders. Attorney General Racine’s letter noted that the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is monitoring an appeal of the FAA’s implementation of the new flight paths filed by Georgetown University and a coalition of community groups in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Attorney General Racine urged the FAA leaders to reconsider their decision in light of residents’ concerns, citing a 2013 case (*Helicopter Association International, Inc. v. FAA*) in which the agency responded to Long Island residents’ concerns about increasing helicopter noise by requiring use of a flight path that avoided residential areas. The D.C. Circuit upheld that decision, confirming that the FAA had authority to change flight paths in order to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on residents living below them.

A copy of the Attorney General’s letter is attached.