United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 27, 2016

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20150

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Chairman Shuster:

As your committees continue drafting legislation in the coming weeks to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) before the current authorization expires on March 31, 2016, we request that you include language in that bill to address serious concerns in Arizona caused by flight path changes around Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

As you know, the FAA altered flight patterns for routes around Phoenix Sky Harbor in September 2014 as part of the Administration's ongoing implementation of its Next Generation Air Transportation (NextGen) initiative. These changes were made without formal notification to the airport and without adequate opportunity for community engagement in the process. As a result, the new flight path has had major, negative impacts on residents around the airport and the greater Phoenix area.

Since those flight path changes were made, we have introduced an amendment and legislation, S.2406, to address this issue. It would ensure that communities and airports have the opportunity to fully engage with the FAA before future flight path changes are made. In addition, for communities that have been negatively impacted by recent flight path changes that have already been implemented, the provision would create a process to review those changes and require the FAA to consult with airports to determine steps to mitigate the negative effects. The Senate unanimously agreed to this amendment during floor consideration of the *Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Bill* in November 2015.

While we continue to support the aims of NextGen to improve passenger safety and travel efficiency, it is imperative that the implementation process include the airports and communities ultimately affected by these flight path changes. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

John McCain
United States Senator

Jeff Flake
United States Senator