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Oral Testimony (also submitted as written testimony.)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I am here as a concerned citizen and resident of north Franklin County, Maine, representing myself as an individual and also for Western Maine Matters from the Township of Salem, located in the heart of an area known by the Massachusetts Air National Guard as *Condor 1 and Condor 2* (flight training areas) over western Maine. I wish to lodge a complaint over the ANG's proposal to expand training areas and lower the flight level for these areas to 500 feet above ground level from the current status of 7,000 feet above sea level for the purposes of military flight training. I own livestock (horses) and operate a small farm in Salem and my husband makes his living here as a Registered Maine Guide and a logger. We have lived in unorganized territory for the past 11 years and currently have serious concerns about the struggling economy of the region, among other issues specific to protecting our environment.

(Just a note: I did a quick lookup today and on the USDA's website from the 2007 Census on Agriculture for the three counties in Maine that CONDOR covers, (Franklin, Oxford and Penobscot) there were listed approximately 2,000 horses and ponies on 375 farms in the affected area and 20,201 head of cattle on about 528 farms.)

(Paragraph #2 – for the record, but omitted in my oral testimony.)

The Maine DOT, residents, and the Attorney General set forth in a letter from Governor Baldacci to Col. Albro, dated August 28, 2009, a thorough analysis of the ANG's recent Environmental Impact Study of our region, noting many flaws in the document that they clearly outlined. The Governor and his staff did an outstanding job in their determination of the EIS and Baldacci clearly stated that he believed the ANG had not met its burden of proof and requested that, "the public hearing be postponed for six to nine months in order to allow the ANG to conduct a more thorough analysis." The ANG has responded, saying that all concerns have been addressed in the current EIS with the exception of including the Fermata Report from the Brookings Institution. The Governor's request was not met, and here we are today at public hearing.

Having taught research skills to budding scholars as a member of the adjunct faculty for both Central Maine Community College and the University of Maine at Farmington, I read the ANG's Environmental Impact Study, appalled with what I saw. The report was biased and one-sided and failed to include relevant and pertinent (current) objective findings that could have been easily identified and considered. (One resource used was 20 years old and completely outdated with

respect to the area's Bald Eagle habitat and loon nesting sites.) Furthermore, the EIS does not adequately respond to the social and economical impact on an area increasingly dependent on local tourism.

I wrote to my delegation, asking for their support of Governor Baldacci's letter to the ANG and his request for a valid EIS. I also contacted tribal members of the Penobscot Nation. The DEIS states that the Penobscot Nation was contacted in October 2006 and in March of 2007 and no response was received SO therefore, there would be no significant impact on historic Native American Resources. But, if there was disruption to traditional ceremonies, the ANG would quickly create a plan to avoid them.

In section 6-1-9, under "Socioeconomics," the DEIS states, "it would have no significant impact on the tourism industry." The report shares no evidence to support this claim. The work in the DEIS is not "authentic" – a term used among professional researchers - nor does it adequately reflect the current state of the western Maine economy. Clearly, the DEIS did not meet the criteria to prove there would be no significant impact to the Condor areas in western Maine. I think this shoddy work on behalf of the MA-ANG puts the credibility of the FAA on the line and seriously insults the educated and professional people of Maine who have made nurturing the great things about where we live their business and their life's work. Once again, I am stunned that the Governor's requests were not even considered. I am asking that this process cease and desist. THE DEIS IS INCOMPLETE.

I personally would like to see sound data for ALL aircraft that would use the airspace to be included. I asked our delegates for their support in asking the FAA (in writing) to reject this EIS as written.

According to many experts, retired military personnel and area residents well educated on this topic who live in the Condor areas, the ANG has omitted and failed to analyze relevant facts, they have highlighted irrelevant statements, and they have relied on analytic methodologies that have resulted in significant uncertainties in data on which ANG findings and recommendations are based.

I want to know why this issue has returned again for the residents of our region after it was proposed and unanimously rejected in 1992 when Governor John McKernan was in office. What non-biased, credible and reliable study has the ANG conducted proving *no significant impact* on animal life in this pristine wilderness? What studies have been conducted proving *no significant impact* on eco and nature-based tourism and outdoor recreation? What studies have been conducted proving *no significant impact* on property values in the area? What studies have been conducted proving *no significant impact* on western Maine businesses and the need for relocation?

The ANG thinks that nobody lives in this wilderness, classified as quite possibly, "the last great remaining wilderness in the eastern United States," and as having, "superior quality of place," as

stated in an article in the Portland Press Herald, May 11, 2008. It seems to me, that finding *no significant impact* across the board helps the ANG to convince the FAA that making changes to the airspace over western Maine *forever* is no big deal and business as usual. The cumulative effect of all these *no significant impacts* do add up to a significant impact on our area that has yet to be examined or understood.

There is an old Cherokee saying that reads, "Listen! Or your tongue will make you deaf." In closing, I will tell you that my horses respond to my faintest whisper. The "startle effect" on these "flight" animals from an F-15 blasting over my back yard at 500 feet will create a kind of chaos I don't even dare to imagine. I will surely have dead or at best, seriously injured animals on my hands. So I ask now, who will be responsible for this?

Our future, our economic hopes and dreams, our cultural, historical and environmental assets and our peaceful way of life is at stake and I urge you to listen and to hear the unified voice of the people of western Maine once again on this issue.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Brown Burbank, MSED.  
Salem Township, Maine