

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 30, 2009

Mr. J. Randolph Babbitt
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW, Suite 1010
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Mr. Babbitt:

We are writing to convey our concerns about the Massachusetts Air National Guard's proposal to expand and lower the flight level for the Condor 1 and Condor 2 flight training areas over Western Maine. Some of our constituents have asked that their concerns, many of which are outlined below, be addressed prior to the Air National Guard's rescheduled public hearing on November 14, 2009.

We appreciate the Air National Guard's recent decisions to reschedule the public hearing to review the draft of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and extend the public comment period until the end of the year—both of which will allow citizens a better opportunity to weigh in on the study and express their concerns. Nevertheless, many of our constituents continue to be concerned about the draft EIS and the potential impact these flight level changes would have on the environment, the economy, and the quality of life in Western Maine.

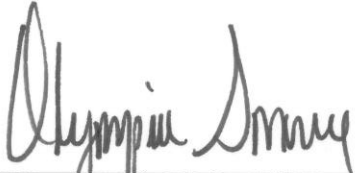
We understand that the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) formal approval of the airspace modification would take place after the Air National Guard submits the final EIS, but our constituents are very concerned that the FAA may have already determined to approve the airspace change. In addition, both the Maine Department of Transportation and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association have expressed concerns regarding the proposals. While we understand the decision would not occur until final approval after the final EIS is submitted, we ask that you respond to these concerns and provide relevant information on interactions the FAA has had with the Air National Guard on this issue.

We understand the need and importance of providing appropriate training capacity for our ANG, but we believe more information is needed about the effects of these proposed changes. Many constituents are concerned about the work conducted on the EIS, and they are particularly concerned that the document is not signed and lacks a list of authors' qualifications, which is standard inclusion for all draft and final EISs. They also continue to be concerned that the economic impact of the proposed changes has not been given sufficient attention or analysis. We have asked the Air National Guard to respond to these concerns.

Maine State Representative Thomas Saviello, who represents Maine House District 90 in Western Maine, has brought his concerns about the proposals to us, including those that have been outlined above. We have enclosed a copy of his correspondence for your review, and we ask that you respond to his concerns about the FAA's position and participation to date.

Thank you for your efforts to ensure that these proposals are considered in the most thorough and comprehensive way. We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to working with you in finding suitable airspace in which to conduct your training exercises.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator



SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator

Enclosure