

Condor Flights
November 14, 2009

Good afternoon.

My name is Rep. Paul Gilbert, HD 87, the towns of Chesterville, Jay, Mercer, New Sharon and Starks. I am also a veteran. I served in the U.S. Army from 1965 to 1968.

“Maine – The Way Life Should Be” is a way of life here in Western Maine.

I’m here today on behalf of my constituents. We stand together in opposition to the proposal of lowering the minimum flight altitude from 7000 feet to 500 feet of any jet, military or otherwise over our homes.

We, native Mainers and people from away, chose to live here for the serenity that this part of Maine affords us. If we were not bothered by noise and pollution that this change promises, we would probably live near Logan, LaGuardia or Newark.

But we chose to stay here and in some cases to relocate to this rural area. We invested our time and fortunes in our homes and do not appreciate any changes to the serenity that we enjoy in Franklin, Oxford and Somerset counties.

Many people have also made economic decisions to locate and develop their businesses here that are related to camping, hunting, fishing and recreation and built around our pristine environment. The proposal, presented by the Air National Guard, would change that.

Farmers would also be affected. A frightened animal produces less and production of a farmers herd would be diminished. Egg and milk production would be reduced, bringing more economic problems for our already strapped farmers.

Economic development is always a struggle, especially in rural areas. Just ask members of the Greater Franklin Development Corporation, the River Valley Growth Council or anyone who has been involved in economic development in rural Maine.

However, with years of work, we are beginning to change that. The future looks promising. The proposal from the Air National Guard for Condor Flights would dash our dreams for successful economic develop based on our serene, pristine environment and our way of life. We stand in opposition to the proposal.

Rep. Paul Gilbert
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