

COUNTY OF SONOMA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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March 27, 2025

Federal Aviation Administration
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
c/o ANCIR Portal, ARA-210
800 Independence Ave. S.W., Suite 306
Washington, DC 20591

RE: Urgent Request for Relief from RREHD Departure and Arrival Procedure Changes Impacting Sonoma County

Dear FAA Noise Ombudsman,

On behalf of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, I write to formally express concern over the significant noise impacts resulting from the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) implementation of the RREHD departure procedure at the Charles M. Schulz - Sonoma County Airport (STS). The procedural changes have resulted in a dramatic shift in flight paths, disproportionately affecting communities in western Sonoma County that historically experienced little to no aircraft-related noise concerns.

According to data collected from our Vector Noise Management System 2024 noise complaints have surged to an average of 399 reports per month, a fourfold increase from 2023's average of 94 complaints per month. Furthermore, 85% of current complaints originate from western Sonoma County, particularly areas impacted by both the RREHD departure procedure and changes to arrival paths from the south that now vector aircraft closer to the Town of Sebastopol.

2023 to 2024 Metrics

2023 Total Noise Complaints: 1,128
2023 Total Households Reporting: 108
2024 Total Complaints: 4,792
2024 Total Households Reporting: 226

Key Concerns:

1. Departures

Noise concerns reported skyrocketed from 2023 to 2024:

December 2023

33 Complaints related to departures
11 Households

December 2024

447 Complaints – a 1,255% increase

24 Households – a 118% increase

2. New Households Reporting

New Households Reporting Noise Issues Increased by 108% from 2023 to 2024

New Noise Reporting Households in 2023: **50**

New Noise Reporting Households in 2024: **104**

3. Disproportionate Impact on Western Sonoma County:

a. Prior to RREHD, this region registered minimal complaints.

b. Post-RREHD, residents in formerly unaffected areas have experienced **significant disruption in quality of life.**

c. The procedural changes have created new noise corridors over previously quiet residential and rural communities.

4. Changes in Arrival Procedures Affecting Sebastopol:

a. In addition to departures, **revised arrival vectors now direct aircraft closer to Sebastopol.**

b. These changes have increased aircraft noise exposure for a larger population of residents who had no prior concerns with airport operations.

Given these substantial and measurable impacts, I respectfully urge the FAA to provide immediate relief by **returning to the use of the Charlie & departure procedure** until an alternative solution is developed. The unintended consequences of RREHD and new arrival path changes warrant urgent review and mitigation efforts to prevent further negative impacts on our residents and environment.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this critical issue and request a response outlining what steps the FAA can take to address these concerns. Please feel free to contact my office at (707) 565-4736 or LegislativeAffairs@sonoma-county.org to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



Lynda Hopkins, Chair

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

CC: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors