



Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

To: Dane County Executive Joe Parisi
Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway

Dear County Executive and Mayor,

If I were talking to either of you in person here in our near east side neighborhood, there's a good chance that we'd have to take a 15 second pause somewhere in our conversation because a jet would fly overhead and the deafening sound would render our words unintelligible. We'd shake our heads and patiently wait for the roar to subside so our conversation – and life – could return to normal. On especially bad days, the F-16 jets come roaring overhead and make the jumbo jets seem tame in comparison. Most of us have come to accept this unwanted but inescapable feature of our dear neighborhood. It's testament to the human capacity to acclimate and adapt. We are resilient and we carry on.

But today we have a chance to reevaluate our everyday disruptions. It's not that the flights have stopped for a day and left us noise-free; No, instead we stand on the edge of a decision that could greatly increase or greatly reduce the noise. I am writing about the proposed siting of the F-35A military bomber jets at Truax Air Base here in Madison, of course, and I send this letter on behalf of the SASY Neighborhood Association to voice our strong opposition to their location here.

Our voice joins a powerful chorus of opposition. Article after article is appearing online and in print in opposition to siting the planes at the Truax base. Many of us have pored through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) over the past month. Were the public opinion outcry not enough, the EIS fills in the unsavory details that provide an empirical backing for all that opposition: significant noise impacts, outsized impact on low income and minority populations, and the rendering of some land as "incompatible" with housing. You know the details. It is impossible to read this and not conclude that some of the other proposed locations would be superior in the sense that a base location would negatively impact far fewer people. To welcome the F-35As to Madison is to invite further hardship on more people than ever before.

Not to miss the bigger picture, we understand the allure of the perceived economic benefits that locating the F-35A jets here would bring. It is hard not to be swayed by the idea of federal tax dollars flowing into the local economy. Economic arguments drive so much of what we do as a society.

Allow me to interrupt that thought with a 15 second roaring jet sound to remind you that there are many real people who have been living with this awful situation for many years, and it makes a negative difference in our lives. This is an issue of equity for all those who have and will ensure an outsized negative impact from the location of fighter jets at the Truax base.

There are two decisions before you now. First, whether to support or oppose the siting of the F-35A jets at the Truax base. We encourage you to oppose Truax as a location. Further, we respectfully request that you go on record to clearly articulate your position on the issue as an elected official and convey that position to us. That is exactly what Representative Chris Taylor, County Supervisor Yogesh Chawla and Alder Marsha Rummel have done in their joint press release dated August 8, 2019.

SASY

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The second decision is what to do in the event that the F-35A jets do get cited here. Despite all the opposition we know that this is still a very real possibility. Because of that possibility we ask that you commit now to demanding real investments in broad-base mitigation measures should the F-35As come here. Mitigation has never been taken seriously in our community as it has in many others. There are investments that could be made in soundproofing homes, relocating the affected people, altering flight paths, and many other measures. As elected officials, you would be in exactly the right positions to leverage investments in one area to benefit another. None of this is suggest tacit acceptance that the location of the F-35As here is a foregone conclusion. As the saying goes, we hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

Thank you for all your time and efforts as our elected officials. In so many ways we benefit from strong leadership in our community. The decisions that lay before you now present opportunities for true leadership. We are hopeful and confident that you will listen to our voices as we join so many others in opposing these jets in our community. We look forward to hearing your response to this letter.

Respectfully,



Bradley Hinkfuss
President – SASY, Inc.

Cc: Alder Marsha Rummel, Supervisor Yogesh Chawla, Representative Chris Taylor, SASY Board of Directors,
US National Guard Bureau