

Subject: Surf Air Noise Disturbance on Schools

Dear Principal and School Officials:

A new airline, Surf Air, started flying into the San Carlos airport, in June of 2013 and has caused a major spike of noise complaints and safety concern from the residents near its flight path. The San Carlos airport is a non-commercial airport that is not meant to handle airline traffic. Local residents have formed a Working Group and has been working with the San Mateo County Supervisors to address the issue. The Supervisors held public hearings in its board chambers recently and are planning to make a decision by early June of 2016.

Given that a number of K-12 schools are under or near the flight path used by Surf Air and children from these schools are impacted, the Working Group is reaching out to school officials to help them understand this issue and obtain their input. (See attachment for schools impacted and flight path). We have identified your school as one of the schools under or near the flight path.

Also attached is a briefing of the issues created by Surf Air, including some studies regarding noise impact on school children and learning. We would love to get your support in our effort to curtail the noise and the safety hazards of a large number of small aircrafts flying over our homes and schools.

If you are in support, please sign the attached school petition letter and return to me. We will share all letters from the schools with the Supervisors.

Sincerely,

Schools Impacted by Surf Air Flight Path

Children from the following schools are impacted by Surf Air's landing path to San Carlos Airport. Please see attached map and Situation Brief. We are collecting signatures from these schools to present to the San Mateo County Supervisors requesting them to help abate the noise and safety hazards.

- 1) Summit Preparatory
- 2) Synapse School
- 3) Taft Community School
- 4) Garfield Community School
- 5) Head Start Preschool
- 6) Encinal Elementary
- 7) Nativity Elementary
- 8) Laurel Elementary
- 9) The Peninsula School
- 10) Roberts Preschool
- 11) Willow Oaks School
- 12) German American School
- 13) Menlo Atherton
- 14) Addison Elementary
- 15) Walter Hayes School
- 16) Las Lomas Elementary School
- 17) La Entrada School
- 18) Academy of American Ballet
- 19) Allegro School of Music and Dance

Surf Air Noise Disturbance of Local Residents and Schools

Statements from **local** teachers and school officials:

A 2016 Almanac submission states: "I am a retired teacher. I know from experience that if the door opens in a classroom, all attention goes to that point. Likewise, when a plane buzzes a school, all attention is taken from instruction or learning and getting back on track takes many students longer than ten seconds."

Another submission in late 2015 states: "Teachers in the neighborhood have reported little children running to them in fear when Surf Air flights come in for landing."

Recently in 2016 a teacher stated "I work at a school in Mountain View and one in Palo Alto. They (Surf Air) fly over both schools and are so noisy. As you know, they are LOW."

From a local principal: "I am not sure if there is anything we can do directly, but we are happy to support anything that reduces pollution, be it noise, water, or air."

Surf Air Disturbance of Local Residents and Schools - Situation Brief -

Surf Air and the San Carlos Airport

Surf Air is a new airline that uses the model of “all you can fly.” Members pay a fixed fee and can take as many flights as they want in a week. Surf Air started flying to San Carlos in June of 2013 and has been increasing its number of flights rapidly. It is currently operating roughly 45 flights per DAY in and out of the San Carlos airport, with plans to rapidly add an additional flights. Surf Air chose to use the Pilatus PC-12, which is a small aircraft carrying about 10 people that is especially noisy with a very strong, distinct pitch. The landing path used by Surf Air is packed with houses and a large number of K-12 schools. (See attachment for flight path and schools impacted).

Surf Air chose to fly into San Carlos airport even though San Carlos is not a commercial airport that can handle a high number of regularly scheduled flights. Surf Air is the only airline flying in and out of San Carlos. Under current general rules, the owners of San Carlos airport (San Mateo County) seems to be obligated to allow Surf Air to use the airport but has the authority to impose restrictions to address the noisy disturbances. Other non-commercial airports are also looking at issues created by Surf Air’s business model.

Surf Air has an FAA license part 135, which means that it is not required to meet the same safety standards as major airlines. Its pilots are not required to hold an airline transport pilot certificate and its passengers do not go through normal security screening. Small commuter planes like those used by Surf Air are not only noisy but also have a far higher crash rates than jets used by major airlines. For example, a small plane recently crashed into a golf course in Hayward in 2015 and another crash into a transmission line in East Palo Alto in 2010, with pieces of the crash falling into a day care center. If Surf Air ever have to make an emergency landing before they reach San Carlos, they would likely land on a school play yard or something similar, presenting a safety hazards for the school children.

Impact on Children and Learning

Over twenty studies have reported that noise adversely affects children’s academic performance. One of the largest and most extensive studies on the impact of aircraft noise on health, and on children’s education, was done in Germany. Published in 2014, the section “Aircraft Noise disturbs the classroom,” found that “The lessons are interrupted by noise in many ways and the attention of children thereby often distracted.” The study found “a linear exposure - effect relation was found between aircraft noise exposure at school and impaired reading comprehension.”

From the International Journal of Comparative Psychology in 2007, "One way noise may affect health is through annoyance: noise causes annoyance responses in both children and adults..." "For children, effects of aircraft and road traffic noise have been observed for impaired reading comprehension and memory skills."

Local teachers can attest to this impact. A recent 3/15/16 Almanac submission states: "I am a retired teacher. I know from experience that if the door opens in a classroom, all attention goes to that point. Likewise, when a plane buzzes a school, all attention is taken from instruction or learning and getting back on track takes many students longer than ten seconds." Another submission on 10/14/15 states: "Teachers in the neighborhood have reported little children running to them in fear when Surf Air flights come in for landing."

San Mateo County Supervisors and residents Working Group

Neighbors noticed the noise from these Surf Air flights as soon as they started in 2013. In 2014, more than 150 residents met with local officials from Menlo Park and Atherton to request relief from the noise of these flights. Local residents formed a Working Group and launched calmtheskies.org to address the issue. A Petition on the website has more than 800 signatures.

Since San Mateo County owns the airport, it is the responsibility of the County Supervisors to address the health and safety of its citizens. On March 8, 2016 the Supervisors held a public hearing to consider ways to reduce the airplane noise and called for a study of noise generated by airplanes flying in and out of the airport and could impose mandatory restrictions. A decision is planned for early June.

Schools Joining Petition

The Residents Working Group is reaching out to schools under the flight path to join the residents in requesting the Supervisors to enact measures that will reduce the noise and safety hazards over classrooms and neighborhoods. Those measures will also improve the health and safety for our students, teachers, and staff. Please see attached sample School Petition letter. If your school would like to join the effort, please print letter (in the school letterhead if possible), sign and return to the Residents Working Group.

School Letter to Supervisors

Dear San Mateo County Supervisors:

Our school is located in the flight path of Surf Air's planes using the San Carlos airport. We are concerned about the noise level and the potential hazards of having so many additional small planes flying over our school and our school children.

The noise is a distraction to our teaching efforts and potentially harmful to our children's health. We respectfully ask that you help abate this noise and safety hazard.

We support the residents' effort to curtail Surf Air operations to the San Carlos airport and suggestions from your study session of March 8, 2016 to implement the following:

- a) Impose daytime restrictions and a nighttime curfew (to prevent sleep disruption of our students)
- b) Implement restrictions on the number of flights by carrier
- c) Request higher altitude approaches or different approaches to the airport

We strive to provide an environment conducive to learning. We need and appreciate your help furthering the education of our young learners.

Sincerely,

Date:

Title:

School:

Contact Info: