



FAiR Solutions:
Neighborhood-based air traffic plan
Mandatory "Fly Quiet"
Noise monitoring and abatement
Environmental Impact Statement
Use all runways

FAiR gathers democratically as a citizen led initiative to build community

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAiR Says Mayor's Press Release on FAA Noise Study Diverts Focus From Real Problem: Diagonal Runways, Not Just Noise Studies, Are The Real Solution

The Fair Allocation in Runways (FAiR) Coalition contends that the Mayor's press release of May 7, 2015 touting the benefits of an expedited Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) noise study does absolutely nothing to provide relief to the tens of thousands of residents in both city and suburbs who have been seeking solutions since October 17, 2013. That was when a change in flight patterns at O'Hare Airport sent hundreds of new flights a day over highly dense residential areas that had never seen such volumes of planes before, and who had no inkling of how drastic that imposed change would be. FAiR maintains that while soundproofing homes provides a small measure of relief while inside one's home, preserving and using all the existing diagonal runways—including those scheduled for decommissioning by the city (not the FAA as Mayor Emanuel attempts to state) as early as this August—is the real key to equitably distributing the burden of jet noise and pollution, and allowing taxpayers to reclaim some of the quality of life that was taken from them a year and a half ago.

"Soundproofing, noise monitors, and additional 'hearings'—which we know from previous articles in the Sun Times are not really forums for input and discussion but rather presentations of what will be imposed—are a diversion. The same high numbers of planes at the same intolerable volumes -will still fly over the same three narrow east-west strips on either side of O'Hare," said Colleen Mulcrone, FAiR Leadership member. "The true path to meaningful relief for residents is an equitable distribution of air traffic, and that can only happen if all of the existing diagonal runways are preserved and used. Legislation currently in the Illinois House, SB 636 and 637, would do that." She added, "Why wouldn't the Mayor also support the bills that would produce the most potential relief? He himself floated that idea during the runoff debates."

FAiR is a coalition of community organizations dedicated to the equitable distribution of O'Hare aircraft traffic

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The October 2013 change to a mainly east-west flow in flight patterns and the subsequent intentional reduction in use of the diagonal runways, specifically the two 14/32 runways slated for decommissioning, was supposed to lead to greater efficiency at O'Hare while expanding capacity. While O'Hare's overall on-time performance has stagnated or even decreased, over the same period of time hundreds of thousands of city and suburban residents, many of whom live in communities older than O'Hare and some in communities as far east as the lakefront and as far west as Bloomingdale, have experienced unprecedented levels of noise and pollution, reflected in the record numbers of noise complaints which recently topped one million on the FAiR-member created ChicagoNoiseComplaint.com.

"Sound insulation does nothing to help residents get back their yards, parks, playgrounds, or even sit inside their home with the windows open on a pleasant day," said FAiR Leader Angie Ferraro. "If I open my windows now I get polluted, not fresh air, to say nothing of the noise. Passing SB 636 and 637 would at least give people the chance of a break from the non-stop planes all day and late into the night."

State Senator John Mulroe (D-10th) introduced legislation in early April that would increase the total permitted number of runways from 8 to 10, and prohibit the destruction of any diagonal runways so that they may be used to equitably distribute air traffic. The two bills, SB 636 and SB 637, are scheduled for a second hearing in the Transportation Committee on Wednesday, May 13th at 10:00 a.m. in the Capitol building.

"The window to take decisive action that would preserve options for both short- and long-term solutions is closing fast," said Jac Charlier, co-founder of FAiR. "If the diagonals are decommissioned, the noise and pollution are going to be concentrated in the same narrow areas where we all already know--without a lengthy study and at no cost to taxpayers-- there is an enormous problem. The legislators who allow that to happen are going to have to own that just as the Mayor owns this issue. Soundproofing and noise studies mean nothing to people whose quality of life has been taken from them."

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The Fair Allocation in Runways (FAiR) Coalition is a rapidly growing movement of citizens and civics on Chicago's Northwest side and the near Northwest suburbs. FAiR is the leading voice for both city and suburban residents negatively impacted by the new runway takeoff and landing patterns. FAiR supports the economic engine that is O'Hare while also seeking a real role in when and where those engines fly over the residents, homes, parks and schools of impacted communities. FAiR recognizes that two more runways are yet to be completed and the problems posed by yet more massive increases in airplane traffic will only become worse if citizens do not have a voice in the process.

FAiR requests residents report airplane noise complaints online throughout the day at www.fairchicago.org or 800-435-9569. Citizens and civic organizations are invited to learn more about and join FAiR at www.fairchicago.org. FAiR is also on Facebook.

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