

**Supporting Statement A**  
**FAA Aircraft Noise Complaint and Inquiry System (Noise Portal)**  
**OMB Number 2120-0773**

This application for renewal contains no programmatic changes, adjustments or revisions to the FAA's original request. However, there have been modest changes in labor rates and inflation since 2018 (the year the Noise Portal began) affecting the FAA's estimated costs.

In 2018, the FAA's specific labor costs were \$236,250 per year. This was based on the median base wage for an E Band (GS 8 equivalent) employee and an estimated burden of total public hours is 11,250 hours (further, the public hours burden was, and still is, based on approximately 45,000 people voluntarily using the FAA Noise Portal taking an average of 15 minutes to enter the information).

In 2021, that labor rate increased to \$247,500 per year. This number represents the median base wage for an E Band (GS 8 equivalent) employee at a rate of \$45,222 per annum or \$22 per hour. Neither the estimated burden of total public hours (i.e., 11,250) nor the approximate number of voluntarily public use (45,000) changed.

This change is not the result of the Noise Portal's existence, but rather, normal increases to labor costs due to economic factors outside of FAA's control.

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.**

In 2016 the FAA received over 35,000 aircraft noise complaints and inquiries from the public. At the time, there was no straightforward FAA process or regional point of entry for the public to submit noise complaints or inquiries. As a result, public noise complaints and inquiries get forwarded within the FAA until the appropriate person or organization receives and responds to them. This resulted in delayed and inconsistent FAA responses to the public and a time-consuming distraction for FAA employees who mistakenly received them. The FAA Noise Portal provides: (1) a clear point of entry for the public to submit FAA related noise complaints and inquiries (2) instructions and specific web-based fields to ensure the public provides the necessary information for FAA to address their complaint or inquiry, and (3) an agency-wide tracking system that automates the process to improve efficiency and consistency.

There is no specific citation, statute or executive order that requires the "collection of information"; however, 49 U.S.C. § 106(q), establishes an Aircraft Noise Ombudsman in the FAA, with general duties and responsibilities that include serving as a liaison with the public on issues regarding aircraft noise. In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) 1976 Aviation Noise Abatement Policy states the following:

The federal government has the authority and responsibility to control aircraft noise by the regulation of source emissions, by flight operational

procedures, and by management of the air traffic control system and navigable airspace in ways that minimize noise impact on residential areas, consistent with the highest standards of safety. The federal government also provides financial and technical assistance to airport proprietors for noise reduction planning and abatement activities and working with the private sector, conducts continuous research into noise abatement technology.

Some airports have noise abatement program offices and complaint systems in place for the public to submit noise complaints or inquiries associated with operations at that airport. The FAA does not duplicate these efforts and provides links to the airport noise complaint systems on the FAA regional noise websites.

The FAA regional aircraft noise websites also contain information on roles and responsibilities on aircraft noise. This includes who the public should contact on noise issues, links to FAA aircraft noise policies, frequently asked questions and answers, information on FAA-related projects with noise impacts, and a link to the FAA Noise Portal.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

The FAA Regional Administrators' Offices and the FAA Noise Ombudsman use the information voluntarily submitted by the public in the FAA Noise Portal to prepare responses to their noise complaints or inquiries. The required FAA Noise Portal fields represent the minimum amount of information the FAA needs to address the public's noise complaint or question and include name, email, address/cross street, and a description of the noise complaint or inquiry. It is important to know the person's name and email address to respond and track the complaint.

The FAA does not respond to the same complaint from the same person more than once. The address or cross street is needed for the FAA to determine potential sources of the aircraft noise issues as most people complain about aircraft in the vicinity of their residence. The agency uses the description to provide additional details for the FAA to address the complaint or question better.

The FAA uses the information to more efficiently and effectively address noise complaints/inquiries from the public. Before the noise portal, many different FAA employees received noise complaints/inquiries from the public. The data collected is centralized in the noise portal to efficiently process complaints/inquiries, reduce delays in responses and allow FAA Regional Administrator's Offices and the FAA Office of Environment and Energy to look for trends regarding the public's concerns or interests on aircraft noise.

The FAA Office of Environment and Energy (AEE) retains control over the information and safeguards it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with FAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. AEE does not plan to disseminate the information but may use it to support general summaries about FAA noise complaints and inquiries when queried by public officials, excluding personal identification information.

In addition, the FAA will use the information to identify common complaints or inquiries and establish a site for commonly asked questions and answers to post to the FAA regional aircraft noise websites. The public (or interested parties) may access the site to get responses to commonly asked questions regarding noise. The FAA may also use the data to identify trends regarding noise concerns, ensure consistency in responses, and identify similar complaints.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.**

The FAA Noise Portal is an automated, electronic system with external (public-facing) and internal (agency access) components. It provides a more efficient means of receiving, processing, and responding to noise complaints and inquiries for both the public and the FAA. There is no form involved; however, several required web-based fields prompt the public to submit the information the FAA needs at a minimum to answer their question. These fields may be viewed at <https://noise.faa.gov/noise/pages/noise.html>. See attached screenshot of the web-based fields of the FAA Noise Portal. Members of the public will still have the option to send a letter or call the FAA regional offices to submit a noise complaint or inquiry as they do today. The FAA does not plan to make the results of the information collection from the Noise Portal available to the public over the internet.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The Noise Portal is the exclusive, agency-wide mechanism to organize and centralize incoming noise complaints/inquiries and responses from the FAA. The FAA Noise Portal automated system uses JIRA software already in use by the FAA for other projects. The software is modified for noise complaints or inquiries.

As stated in our response to Question 1, some airports have noise abatement program offices and complaint systems in place for the public to submit noise complaints or inquiries associated with operations at that airport. The FAA does not duplicate these efforts and provides links to the airport noise complaint systems on the FAA regional

noise websites. There are certain noise complaints and questions specific to the FAA that the airport sponsors cannot answer.

The FAA regional aircraft noise websites contain information on roles and responsibilities regarding: aircraft noise, points of contact on noise issues, links to FAA aircraft noise policies, frequently asked questions and answers, information on FAA related projects with noise impacts, and a link to the FAA Noise Portal.

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

This collection does not involve small business or small entities.

**6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

The FAA Noise Portal is voluntary for the public to use if the public wants to submit a noise complaint or inquiry to the FAA electronically. The FAA Noise Portal web-based fields prompt the public to submit a set of required and optional information for the FAA to address their noise complaint or inquiry better. They can also mail a letter or call the FAA Regional offices to submit a noise complaint or inquiry.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**

Submission of a complaint or inquiry to the FAA Noise Portal is voluntary. There are no special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;
- requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
- requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;
- in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;

- requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
- that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
- requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice published on (02/08/2021) (86 FR 8676) solicited public comment for 60 days. See attached FAA Response to Public Comments Matrix (86 FR 8676) for a detailed summary of the three public comments FAA received and FAA's responses to those comments.

In summary, the FAA received comments from 2 individuals; and one from the city of College Park, GA. The individuals complained about aircraft noise at specific airports, which was not applicable to the public notice. We noted this as N/A in the FAA comment response matrix for OMB and restated the purpose of the FAA Noise Portal.

The FAA received a supporting comment from the City of College Park, Georgia, noting its geographic proximity to the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and commending the FAA for tracking, understanding and addressing airport noise issues via the Noise Portal. College Park also submitted suggestions for ways the FAA's information collection, presentation, and public dissemination of information collected under this information collection could be improved in the future.

We did not receive any comments on the cost and hour burden of the Noise Portal.

The FAA does not consult respondents within the general public to obtain their views on the collection or disclosure of any records received. However, the agency does solicit feedback from airport partners and user groups on a routine basis to gauge the effectiveness of the program and make needed changes.

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

N/A. The FAA has will not be providing payments or gifts to respondents.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

The FAA Noise Portal protects privacy information using several methods. Operating system-level encryption protects privacy information from unauthorized access by external systems or users attempting to access files directly. Role-based access controls and unique user login protect the privacy information from unauthorized access from within the FAA Noise Portal application. FAA users authorized to access the data based on their justified need to address the noise complaint or inquiry are granted access based on their assigned role and use SSL-based encryption to ensure the communications between the users and the portal are protected.

The statement below is included on the public site (Noise Portal) as a pop-up that the public must acknowledge before completing and submitting their noise complaint or inquiry to the FAA.

**Privacy Statement**

This notice is provided in accordance with the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a (e) (3), and concerns the information requested on this web form. AUTHORITY: 44 U.C.S. 3101; Public Law 112-95, Section 341 (3)(A). FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 PRINCIPAL PURPOSE(S): This information will be used to investigate reports of alleged violations involving aviation safety. ROUTINE USE(S): This information may be shared with the Agencies within the Department of Transportation with areas of responsibility for issues being reported, or pursuant to the routine uses identified in the System of Records Notice DOT/FAA 845, Administrator's Correspondence Control and Hotline Information System. To see the routine uses go to

<https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/privacy/privacy-act-system-records-notices>

DISCLOSURE: Voluntary; failure to furnish the requested information may result in an inability to thoroughly investigate your allegations and may therefore result in an inability to respond to your report.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

The FAA Noise Portal does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:**

| Summary (Annual numbers)      | Reporting | Recordkeeping | Disclosure | Total Cost |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|------------|
| # of Respondents              | 45,000    |               |            |            |
| # of Responses per respondent | 1         |               |            |            |
| Time per Response             | .25 hours |               |            |            |
| Total # of responses          | 45,000    |               |            |            |
| Total burden (hours)          | 11,250    |               |            |            |

The estimated burden of total public hours is still 11,250 hours. This is based on the estimate that approximately 45,000 people may voluntarily use the FAA Noise Portal and that it takes an average of 15 minutes to enter the information.

The specific labor costs of this would be \$45,222 per year. The per year labor cost is based on the FAA's Core Compensation Table for 2021, which can be viewed here: [https://www.faa.gov/jobs/working\\_here/benefits/media/core\\_salary\\_with\\_conversion.xls](https://www.faa.gov/jobs/working_here/benefits/media/core_salary_with_conversion.xls). Per the excel sheet, the median base wage for an E band (GS 8 equivalent) employee is \$45,222 per year, for a 40 hour work week or \$22 per hour (E.g. 11,250 x \$22= \$247,500).

The program has no effect on fringe wages, since the FAA must have employees in place to respond to noise complaints, regardless of the Noise Portal's existence. The Portal requires also no special equipment or additional overhead. Further, the numbers above reflect a conservative estimate, since many people that would use the FAA's Noise Portal would likely have submitted a noise complaint or inquiry to the FAA regardless of the Portal's creation. The Noise Portal saves time for both employees and the public by providing clear access and guidance on how to submit, and respond to, a noise complaint.

**13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.**

None.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

Based on the current budget for system maintenance, the total cost to the Federal Government for the FAA Noise Portal is approximately \$240,000 per year, the breakdown is as follows:

- \$50,000 for software licensing (*source: internal agreement with the Office of Performance Analysis [AJR-G]*)
- \$40,000 for internal management/system maintenance (*one hundred hours of J-band [GS14 equivalent] federal employee time per month overseeing portal issues, based on [https://www.faa.gov/jobs/working\\_here/benefits/media/core\\_salary\\_with\\_conversion.xlsx](https://www.faa.gov/jobs/working_here/benefits/media/core_salary_with_conversion.xlsx)*)
- \$150,000 for the contract support each year (*source: Booz-Allen Hamilton/SEMRS Bridge Contract*).

Regardless of the Portal's existence, the FAA is still required to address noise concerns. The Portal provides an efficient method for both the public to share concerns and for the government to respond.

Based on the response time rates, the FAA's Noise Portal has improved efficiencies for FAA employees responding to noise complaints by 57 percent. In addition, newly established FAA websites now direct the public to airport-sponsored noise complaint systems when appropriate. As a result, the FAA estimates that the Portal saves approximately 160 hours per month of employee time. (This number also accounts for the FAA's complaint numbers continuing to rise throughout 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic.)

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

This application for renewal contains no programmatic changes, adjustments or revisions to the FAA's original request. However, there have been modest changes in labor rates and inflation since 2018 (the year the Noise Portal began) affecting the FAA's estimated costs.

In 2018, the FAA's specific labor costs were \$236,250 per year. This was based on the median base wage for an E Band (GS 8 equivalent) employee and an estimated burden of total public hours is 11,250 hours (further, the public hours burden was, and still is,



based on approximately 45,000 people voluntarily using the FAA Noise Portal taking an average of 15 minutes to enter the information).

In 2021, that labor rate increased to \$247,500 per year. This number represents the median base wage for an E Band (GS 8 equivalent) employee at a rate of \$45,222 per annum or \$22 per hour. Neither the estimated burden of total public hours (i.e., 11,250) nor the approximate number of voluntarily public use (45,000) changed.

This change is not the result of the Noise Portal's existence, but rather, normal increases to labor costs due to economic factors outside of FAA's control.

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

The FAA does not plan to publish the results in their entirety. However, information regarding the number and types of complaints will be posted to the FAA's noise.gov pages. The agency hopes to provide greater transparency regarding the types of data the FAA receives for a given location. The FAA intends to post this generic/non-Personally Identifiable information before CY2022.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

We are not seeking such approval.

**18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.