

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

April 24, 2015

Michael P. Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

I am writing on behalf of my constituents who reside in the City of El Segundo to request a time extension under the Residential Sound Insulation Program (RSI) rules for the City of El Segundo, so that the City can rebid a number of construction contracts for homes affected by the program. The City was not able to approve these contracts because the original bids were excessively high. Granting this limited extension will allow the City to rebid these groups and sound insulate these homes as originally intended, but not any additional homes beyond those originally included in the bids. If this small accommodation is not granted, most of the 191 homes included in these groups will never be sound insulated.

El Segundo residents live next to the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), one of the busiest airports in the world, with some residents living only 850 feet from the nearest runway. I understand that the RSI program is available to residents of communities that are impacted by noise from nearby airports, such as El Segundo. Given the close proximity of residents to the airport, it is essential that the City be able to insulate all of the impacted homes.

FAA regulations determine which homes qualify for sound insulation, with the "most-impacted" zone known as the "green zone," and the "less-impacted" zone known as the "yellow zone." Though the yellow zone is less impacted than the green zone, the impacts are still quite real, and for many years RSI funding was available to sound insulate homes in that zone.

However, over the past few years, FAA has made clear that no funds (FAA or Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA)) could be spent on yellow zone homes after December 31, 2015, and that testing for qualified homes in the yellow and green zones must be completed by September 30, 2015.

With this deadline in mind, the City accelerated its process to treat as many homes as possible by the September 30 deadline. The City successfully bid and awarded contracts for 295 homes. However, when the City bid contracts for the final 191 homes to be sound insulated by the 2015 deadlines, the bids significantly exceeded the City's internal engineering estimates. After consulting with the FAA and LAWA, and reviewing both its own bidding procedures and the engineering estimates, the City reluctantly concluded it could not move forward with the bids and rejected all bids at its special Council meeting of March 31, 2015.

In the past, if this problem had occurred, the Council would have simply directed staff to rebid the contracts in anticipation of reasonable bids in the next round. However, due to the September 30, 2015 deadline and the time necessary to complete the entire process (including advertising bid documents, receiving bids, evaluating the bids, awarding the contracts, completing the actual construction, and finalizing various invoicing and reimbursement tasks), there is not sufficient time to complete the process. As a result, these final 191 homes will not be insulated.

I am respectfully asking the FAA to give the City of El Segundo more time to rebid the contracts and insulate these homes. It is fundamentally unfair for these residents to be extra impacted by noise due to the fact that the original bidding process resulted in prices too high for the City. All parties, including the FAA, expected the money for these homes to be expended, and there is no harm whatsoever to anyone, including taxpayers, if the FAA grants this accommodation. The City understands this is a one-time extension to rebid these groups of homes only. If for any reason, the City is not able to finalize one or more home contract groups, it forgoes the ability to treat these groups under the current rules.

If the FAA does not grant this extension, the residents of these 191 homes will be forced to continue to suffer from excessive LAX noise levels, and promises made to insulate these homes will remain unfulfilled. I hope that the FAA will give strong consideration to allow the City of El Segundo to sound insulate these homes and protect many of the constituents in my district from extreme noise distress.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress