



Office of the Mayor

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Statement from Mayor Rhodes-Conway re: F-35 Environmental Impact Statement

There has been substantial discussion and controversy over the potential siting of F-35 jets at the Truax Field. This matter needs careful consideration. Madison has lived with, and benefited from, the Dane County Airport and the Truax Air National Guard Base for decades. Members of the 115th wing are members of our community. They have jobs here, raise their families here, and go to school here in addition to serving in the Air National Guard.

The decision to site F-35s in Madison or anywhere else will be made by the Secretary of the Air Force. In my view, the City's role is to make sure our community has the best possible information about this project, and to ensure that the decision-making process includes accurate information about our community. This is why we conducted a City analysis of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which [can be found here](#).

I am very disappointed in the U.S. Air Force and the Air National Guard's failure to provide adequate information about this project and its potential impacts on our community, and their failure to address misconceptions on the record. The draft EIS says that flights may increase by 27%, which suggests more noise. The sound study says these new, more powerful planes would only engage in afterburner takeoffs 5% of the time (rather than 60%), which suggests less noise. The Air Force's use of the Day Night Average Sound Level (DNL) metric suggests more noise, yet their Sound Exposure Level (SEL) chart indicates little change at the locations of most concern to the community.

The public deserves better information.

Based on what we know – and don't know – today, it's very difficult to evaluate the true impact of this project on the Madison region. Given this uncertainty, I am demanding better answers from the U.S. Air Force and the Air National Guard. Senator Baldwin and Congressman Pocan have both asked the U.S. Air Force detailed questions, we need those answers. Congressman Pocan today asked for actual engine tests to be conducted before the September 27 deadline for comment on the EIS and I fully support that science-based approach.

The U.S. Air Force and the Air National Guard MUST take into consideration all the potential adverse impacts that have been identified by the draft EIS and the City analysis. They should re-evaluate the selection of Truax Field as a preferred location if the final EIS does not respond to these concerns and provide strategies to affirmatively mitigate the noise and other detrimental impacts of siting F-35s at Truax Field.