

## **Navy Declares War On Key West Citizens -- County Issues Cease And Desist Order On Flying F-18 Jets**

*By Stop The Planes . Com*

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*Monroe County Commissioners issue official Cease and Desist Resolution to NAS Key West on March 18, 2009 ordering a halt to FLYING OF F-18 SUPER HORNET JET AIRCRAFT OVER CITIZENS HOMES*

Monroe Commissioners at a meeting on March 18, 2009, unanimously approved a resolution asking Naval Air Station Key West to "immediately cease and desist" Super Hornet training flights until additional noise studies can be done to determine the actual level of noise and the harm it is inflicting on residents who live near Boca Chica Field.

"This is an untenable situation," County Mayor George Neugent said. "If this continues, we will be at odds at a much greater level." He did not elaborate about what might constitute a greater level.

Commissioner Kim Wigington accused the Navy of using "invalid and false" information when creating its flight maps that outline flight zones and noise levels experienced in those zones. An environmental impact statement that allowed the Super Hornets to train over the Lower Keys also did not go far enough, and did not take into the consideration the people living in the area, she said during the heated exchange. The Navy's environmental impact statement indicated no significant effect on residents and is being investigated by the Department of Defense, Investigator General for inclusion of altered data.

As part of her resolution, Wigington submitted a copy of a Navy audit on noise from the Super Hornets, and how the Navy ignored requirements that could have made the planes quieter. The Navy audit states that personnel on Navy aircraft carriers and other aviation support personnel can suffer ear damage, including "likelihood of permanent hearing loss," despite wearing ear protection. The Navy has reportedly paid out over \$700 million in hearing disability payments to veterans associated with the F18 Super Hornet.

"We determined that there were opportunities to improve the mitigation of the flight-line/deck jet noise hazard," the Naval Audit Service report states. "They (Navy command personnel) made no initial attempts to mitigate the flight-line/deck jet noise hazard through design selection."

The report shows the Navy had been aware of the problem, but did nothing about it. Wigington fears the jets are having the same effect on residents near the base.

The resolution is the latest salvo in an ongoing conflict between the Navy and county government involving development encroaching on the airfield. Monroe County commissioners were not shy Wednesday about criticizing the Navy. Naval Base Business Manager Ron Demes told the commission "the Navy would not cease and desist, and that doing so would severely jeopardize the Navy's mission in the Florida Keys." The county gave the Navy 14 days to research noise issues and to meet with county officials in an effort to find a long-term solution to the issue on March 31, 2009.

In retaliation, the Navy has conducted unscheduled "shock and awe" nightly flyovers over neighborhoods which supported the referendum. Debilitating sound levels reached upwards of 120 decibels inside homes since last Saturday and are scheduled to continue through this Sunday. The Navy stated that there is no connection between the unscheduled simulated attacks over citizens homes and the issuing of the County's cease and desist order.

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WE are an organization of Florida Keys Citizens that is asking the US Navy to provide an updated Environmental Impact Statement allowing the Navy to fly f-18 Super Hornet aircraft over our homes. Additionally, we are asking the Navy to cease and desist from the flying of F18 Super Hornets until health research is completed.

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