

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4178

To reestablish the Office of Noise Abatement and Control in the
Environmental Protection Agency, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 15, 2023

Ms. MENG (for herself, Mr. BEYER, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. CHU, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. NADLER, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. SARBANES) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To reestablish the Office of Noise Abatement and Control
in the Environmental Protection Agency, and for other
purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Quiet Communities
5 Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) approximately 28,000,000 individuals in the
4 United States are afflicted with some hearing im-
5 pairment, and it has been estimated that 10,000,000
6 of those impairments are at least partially attrib-
7 utable to damage from exposure to noise;

8 (2) for millions of individuals in the United
9 States, noise from aircraft, vehicular traffic, and a
10 variety of other sources is a constant source of tor-
11 ment;

12 (3) millions of individuals in the United States
13 are exposed to noise levels that can lead to sleep
14 loss, psychological and physiological damage, and
15 work disruption;

16 (4) chronic exposure to noise has been linked to
17 increased risk of cardiovascular disorders, learning
18 deficits in children, stress, and diminished quality of
19 life;

20 (5) excessive noise leading to sleep deprivation
21 and task interruptions can result in untold costs to
22 society as a result of diminished worker productivity;

23 (6) pursuant to the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C.
24 7401 et seq.), the Noise Control Act of 1972 (42
25 U.S.C. 4901 et seq.), and the Quiet Communities
26 Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. 4901 note; Public Law 95—

1 609; 92 Stat. 3079), the Environmental Protection
2 Agency established and maintained an Office of
3 Noise Abatement and Control, which has not re-
4 ceived funding since 1982;

5 (7) responsibilities of the Office of Noise Abate-
6 ment and Control included promulgating noise emis-
7 sion standards, requiring product labeling, facili-
8 tating the development of low-noise-emission prod-
9 ucts, coordinating Federal noise reduction programs,
10 assisting State and local noise abatement efforts,
11 and promoting noise education and research;

12 (8) because the Environmental Protection
13 Agency remains legally responsible for enforcing reg-
14 ulations issued under the Noise Control Act of 1972
15 (42 U.S.C. 4901 et seq.), even though funding for
16 the activities of the Office of Noise Abatement and
17 Control described in paragraph (7) was terminated,
18 and because that Act prohibits State and local gov-
19 ernments from regulating noise sources in many sit-
20 uations, noise abatement programs across the
21 United States lie dormant; and

22 (9) as population growth and air and vehicular
23 traffic continue to increase, noise pollution is likely
24 to become an even greater problem in the future,
25 and the health and welfare of individuals in the

1 United States demands that the Environmental Pro-
2 tection Agency, the lead Federal agency for the pro-
3 tection of public health and welfare, once again as-
4 sume a role in combating noise pollution.

5 **SEC. 3. REESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF NOISE ABATE-**
6 **MENT AND CONTROL.**

7 (a) REESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of the
8 Environmental Protection Agency (referred to in this sec-
9 tion as the “Administrator”) shall reestablish within the
10 Environmental Protection Agency an Office of Noise
11 Abatement and Control (referred to in this section as the
12 “Office”).

13 (b) DUTIES.—The responsibilities of the Office shall
14 include—

15 (1) promoting the development of effective
16 State and local noise control programs by providing
17 States with technical assistance and grants to de-
18 velop those programs, including the purchasing of
19 equipment for local communities;

20 (2) carrying out a national noise control re-
21 search program to assess the impacts of noise from
22 varied noise sources on mental and physical health;

23 (3) carrying out a national noise environmental
24 assessment program—

1 (A) to identify trends in noise exposure
2 and response, ambient levels, and compliance
3 data; and

4 (B) to determine the effectiveness of noise
5 abatement actions, including actions for areas
6 around major transportation facilities (such as
7 highways, railroad facilities, and airports);

8 (4) developing and disseminating to the public
9 information and educational materials relating to the
10 mental and physical effects of noise and the most ef-
11 fective means for noise control through the use of
12 materials for school curricula, volunteer organiza-
13 tions, radio and television programs, publications,
14 and other means;

15 (5) developing educational and training mate-
16 rials and programs, including national and regional
17 workshops, to support State and local noise abate-
18 ment and control programs;

19 (6) establishing regional technical assistance
20 centers to use the capabilities of institutions of high-
21 er education and private organizations to assist
22 State and local noise control programs; and

23 (7) undertaking an assessment of the effective-
24 ness of the Noise Control Act of 1972 (42 U.S.C.
25 4901 et seq.).

1 (c) PREFERRED APPROACHES.—In carrying out the
2 duties of the Office under subsection (b), the Office shall
3 emphasize noise abatement approaches that rely on local
4 and State activities, market incentives, and coordination
5 with other public and private agencies.

6 (d) STUDY.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall
8 carry out a study of aircraft noise and the effects of
9 that noise on surrounding communities.

10 (2) CONTRACTS AND OTHER AGREEMENTS.—
11 The Administrator shall enter into contracts or
12 other agreements with independent scientists with
13 expertise in noise measurements, noise effects, and
14 noise abatement techniques to conduct the study
15 under paragraph (1).

16 (3) CONTENTS.—The study under paragraph
17 (1) shall examine—

18 (A) the selection of noise measurement
19 methodologies by the Federal Aviation Adminis-
20 tration;

21 (B) the threshold of aircraft noise at which
22 health impacts are felt; and

23 (C) the effectiveness of aircraft noise
24 abatement programs at airports around the
25 United States.

1 (4) REPORT.—

2 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years
3 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Ad-
4 ministrator shall submit to Congress a report
5 on the results of the study conducted under
6 paragraph (1).

7 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—The report sub-
8 mitted under subparagraph (A) shall include
9 specific recommendations on new measures that
10 can be implemented to mitigate the impact of
11 aircraft noise on surrounding communities.

12 (e) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The Noise Pollu-
13 tion and Abatement Act of 1970 (Public Law 91–604; 84
14 Stat. 1709) is repealed.

15 **SEC. 4. GRANTS UNDER QUIET COMMUNITIES PROGRAM.**

16 Section 14 of the Noise Control Act of 1972 (42
17 U.S.C. 4913) is amended—

18 (1) in subsection (b)—

19 (A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)
20 by striking “but not limited to”;

21 (B) in paragraph (2) by striking “sections
22 6, 7, and 8 of this Act” and inserting “section
23 6 or 8 of this Act, or section 44715 of title 49,
24 United States Code”; and

1 (C) by redesignating paragraphs (1)
2 through (5) as subparagraphs (A) through (E),
3 respectively, and indenting appropriately;

4 (2) in subsection (c)—

5 (A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)
6 by striking “but not be limited to” and insert-
7 ing “in accordance with the Federal authority
8 pursuant to this Act to regulate sources of
9 noise in interstate commerce”;

10 (B) in paragraph (1)—

11 (i) in subparagraph (C) by striking
12 “and,” at the end;

13 (ii) by redesignating subparagraphs
14 (A) through (D) as clauses (i) through
15 (iv), respectively, and indenting appro-
16 priately; and

17 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
18 lowing:

19 “(v) establishing and implementing
20 training programs on use of noise abate-
21 ment equipment; and

22 “(vi) implementing noise abatement
23 plans;”;

24 (C) by striking the undesignated matter
25 following paragraph (5); and

1 (D) by redesignating paragraphs (1)
2 through (5) as subparagraphs (A) through (E),
3 respectively, and indenting appropriately; and
4 (3) by redesignating subsections (a) through (g)
5 as paragraphs (1) through (7), respectively, and in-
6 denting appropriately.

7 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

8 There is authorized to be appropriated for the Office
9 of Noise Abatement and Control reestablished under sec-
10 tion 3(a) \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024
11 through 2028.

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