



*Too Close for Comfort*

*Save Our Peaceful Skies*

[peacefulchiricahuaskies.com](http://peacefulchiricahuaskies.com)



## **What is “Peaceful Chiricahua Skies” (PCS)**

**All-Volunteer Initiative Supported by  
Multiple Partners, Endorsers and Citizen Volunteers**

**Not a political issue – A Quality of Life and Safety Issue**

### **Purpose of the Initiative**

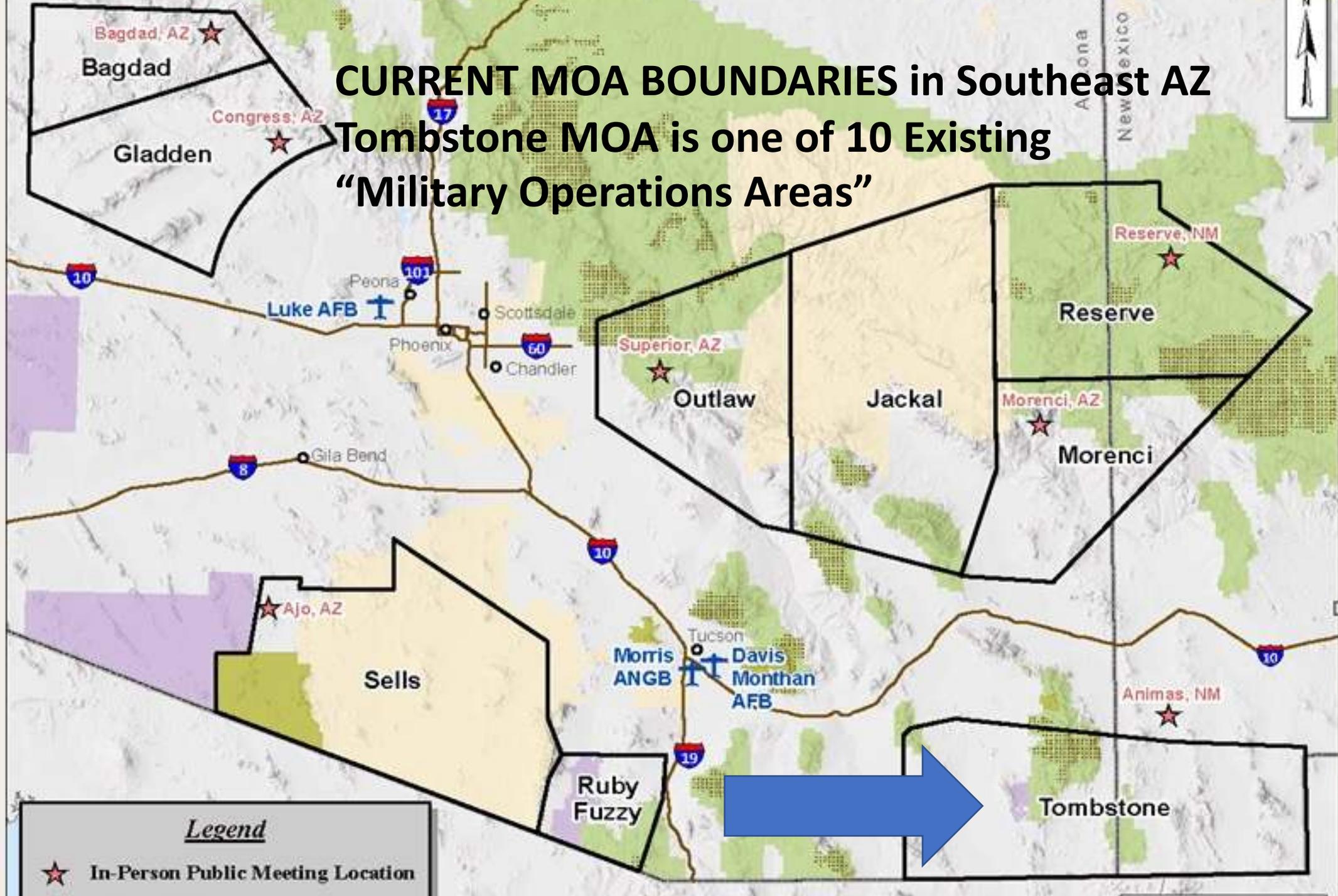
**Alert the public about the effects of a proposed relaxation  
of future regulations for USAF training flights over the  
Chiricahua-Peloncillo Region**



## **2 PARALLEL GOALS OF THIS INITIATIVE**

- 1. STOP UNNEEDED FUTURE EXPANSION of high-decibel and dangerous military flights over the “TOMBSTONE MOA”**
- 2. Compel the Air Force to FOLLOW ITS CURRENT REGULATIONS when flying over residential, agricultural and sensitive public lands.**

**CURRENT MOA BOUNDARIES in Southeast AZ**  
**Tombstone MOA is one of 10 Existing**  
**“Military Operations Areas”**



# WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?

## 2022

- **USAF Notice of Intent for an Environmental Impact Statement** to reduce limitations on USAF training flights over SE Arizona
- **PCS website launched** to alert local communities of proposal
- **Hundreds of local residents turn out** for the only Public Meeting scheduled by USAF in our area—in remote Animas, NM.
- **USAF Comment Period deadline extended** due to number of public comments.
- **PCS submitted 1,000 petition signatures and hundreds of comments at deadline.**

## 2023

- **Petition signatures up to 2,000 with hundreds of noise complaints to date**
- **PCS continues outreach with** letters to editors, elected officials, and agencies
- 4-day **“Peaceful Skies Benefit”** in Tucson drew hundreds of Tribal members, artists, musicians and activists protesting the proposal.
- **Hundreds of local noise complaints being filed with USAF/ANG.**
- **USAF announces delay in releasing the DEIS to Spring, 2024—they are noticing!**



**USAF Held Only ONE Public Information Meeting, Feb. 22, 2022 in ANIMAS**



# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- Draft EIS published, **Spring, 2024**
- Draft EIS Public Comment Period, **Spring, 2024**
- Final EIS publication, **Fall, 2024**
- Record of Decision Signed, **Fall 2024**

# THEY NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU

THIS IS A TOPIC OF HIGH INTEREST!

Send letters to the editor of your local newspapers opposing expanded military training in the Tombstone MOA.

arizonaregionalairspaceeis.com/  
Federal Registry notice  
pdf/2022-00749.pdf  
Comments may be  
through the  
www.  
ArizonaRegionalAirspaceEIS.com. Mail comments to:  
EIS,  
Road, Suite H, Hampton, VA  
23666  
Statement and Notice of  
Availability publication. All  
Period and Hearing, fall 2023  
Final EIS and MOA  
Record of Decision  
signature, summer/fall 2024

**Representatives**  
David Cook, R, District  
Frank Carroll, R, Distric  
John Fillmore, R, Distri  
Pamela Powers Hann  
District 9  
Jammin Blackwater-Ny  
District 7  
Walter Blackman, R, D  
Brian Fernandez, D, Di  
Mark Finchem, R, Dist  
Neal Carter, R, District  
Senators  
Rick Gray, R, District 21  
Kelly Townsend, R, Dis

suggested

# WHERE ARE THEY FLYING FROM?

**Davis-Monthan Airbase in Tucson:**

F-16 — A-10 — C-130 — F-35

**Morris Air National Guard Airbase in Tucson:**

F-16



# F-16 — One Tail Fin / One Engine

Maximum Speed 1,200 mph

Low-altitude speed 500 mph

Altitude Range 100 ft.—50,000 ft





**A-10 — Two Tail Fins / 2 Engines**

**350 mph maximum speed**

**Altitude Range 100 ft.—5,000 ft.**



## C-130

400 mph maximum speed

Altitude Range 100 ft. — 26,000 ft.

~~COMING SOON!~~ **ALREADY HERE**

2-5X louder than an F-16

**F-35 —**

**Two Tail Fins /**

**One Engine**

1,200 mph maximum speed

Altitude Range 100 ft. —50,000 ft.



# **F-35 over Cave Creek Canyon**



**Outside the  
MOA Boundary?**

**Too close to the  
ground?**

**Too close to  
structures,  
people?**

Photo by  
Wyatt Mendez  
7/20/23

# **CONCERNS ABOUT AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS**



- **HIGH-DECIBEL NOISE LEVELS**
- **SONIC BOOMS**
- **CHAFF RELEASE**
- **FLARE RELEASE**
- **ACCIDENTS**

## **OSHA LEGAL LIMITS ON NOISE EXPOSURE**

**Any noise above 90 decibels in the workplace requires employer-provided hearing protection.**

**F-16 at 500 feet above ground at 500 mph produces 120 decibels of noise.**



**Will USAF provide all of us with special hearing protection?**

## **FAA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FLIGHTS NEAR NOISE-SENSITIVE AREAS**

**Visual Flight Rules (VFR) over National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or U.S. Forest Service areas:**

**“All aircraft must maintain a minimum altitude of 2,000 feet above the surface of lands and waters administered by the NPS, UFWS, or USFS Wilderness areas.”**

**“All aircraft are requested to fly at altitudes higher than the minimum permitted by regulation.”**



# WHAT IS A “SONIC BOOM”?

Sound barrier broken @ 761 mph

F-16 at supersonic speed at 5,000 feet above ground  
would produce a sonic boom up to 200 decibels





**EVER HEARD A SONIC BOOM?**

**120 Decibels can break glass.**

**Stop low-level supersonic  
military training flights!**

**[peacefulchiricahuaskies.org](http://peacefulchiricahuaskies.org)**

# CHAFF RELEASE

Countermeasure to confuse enemy radar



NEW PROPOSAL WOULD ALLOW  
DROP FROM 2,000 FEET above ground

(Current : NOT ALLOWED IN TOMBSTONE MOA)

**CHAFF FIBERS  
REACH THE GROUND**

**ALUMINUM-  
COATED  
FIBERGLASS**



# **FLARE RELEASE**

**New Proposal would allow dropping of  
flares from 2,000' above ground  
(Currently 5,000')**

**Countermeasure against  
heat-seeking missiles**





**DON'T ADD  
FUEL TO THE  
FIRE.  
NO FLARES.**

**Two Major Forest Fires  
linked to flare releases**

## UNEXPLODED MILITARY FLARE



Flares do not always ignite, falling to ground as live ordinance that can be triggered by touch.

Live flares that have not completely burned out can also reach the ground, causing wildfire threat.

# DO F-16s EVER CRASH?

From... *The Air Force Times*

By [Rachel S. Cohen](#)

Dec 2, 2022 11:28 AM

**"Six F-16s have been involved in accidents so far this year.** About three Fighting Falcons have been totaled each year on average for the past decade.

F-16s have been in the Air Force inventory since the 1980s; about 700 of the airframes remain."

Rachel Cohen joined Air Force Times as senior reporter in March 2021. Her work has appeared in Air Force Magazine, Inside Defense, Inside Health Policy, the Frederick News-Post (Md.), the Washington Post, and others.

# Potential Aircraft Collisions with Birds

**141 Turkey  
Vultures flocking  
In often-used  
Military Airspace  
above Cave Creek  
Canyon**



Cathedral Rock

*Photo by  
Helen Snyder*

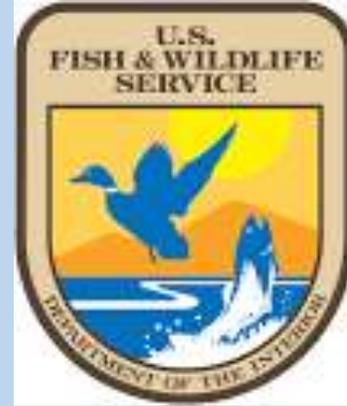
## THREATS TO WILDLIFE

Southern Arizona has **140 ESA-Listed plant and animal species** as Endangered, Threatened and Species of Concern, many living in the Chiricahua-Peloncillo Mountain region

**ESA-listed species are easily affected by high-decibel, low-elevation flyovers**



## **USFWS APPROVALS REQUIRED FOR DISRUPTION OF HABITAT**

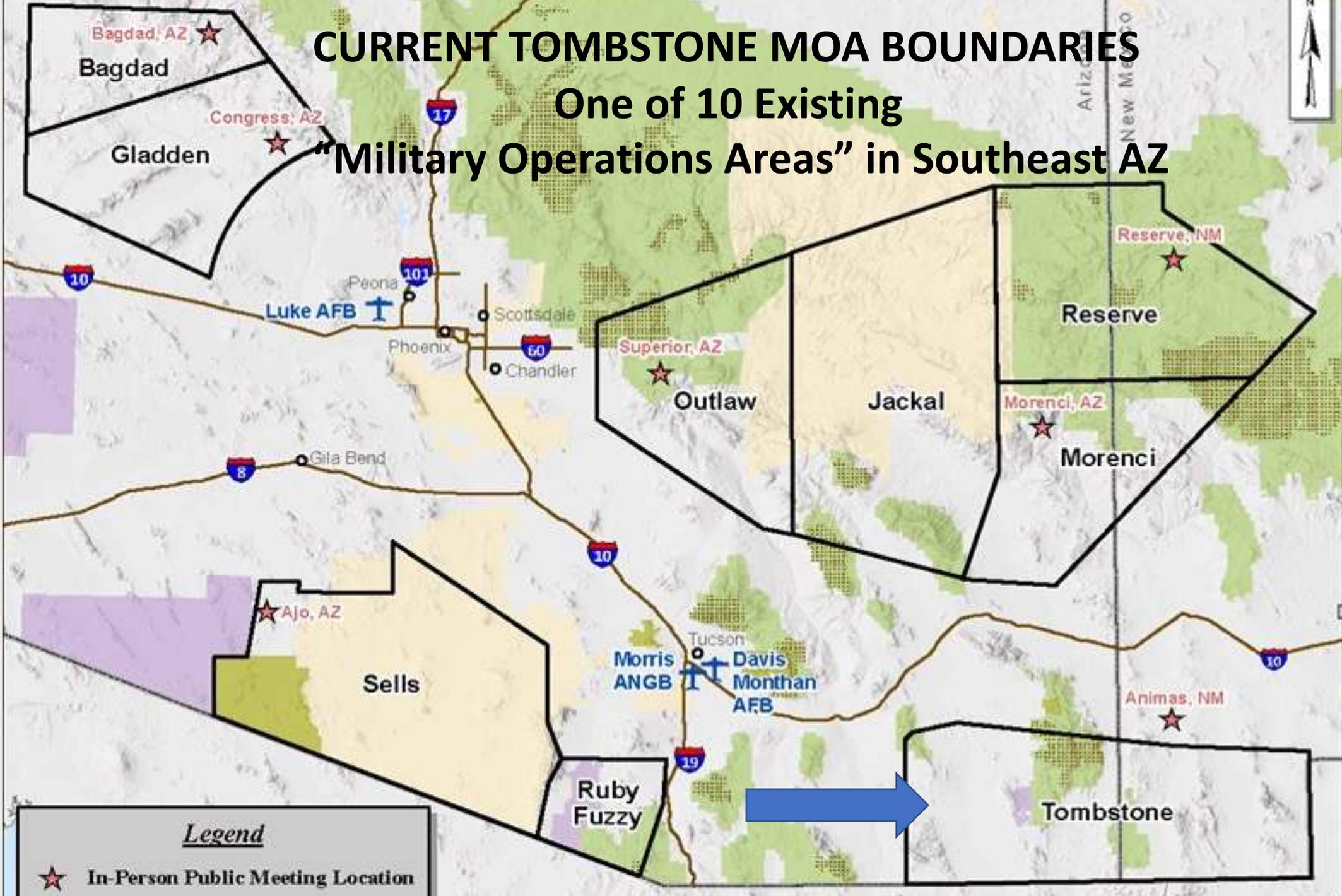


**....Activities must not be "likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitats."**

**The USAF must consult with all agencies affected by the new proposal.**

# CURRENT TOMBSTONE MOA BOUNDARIES

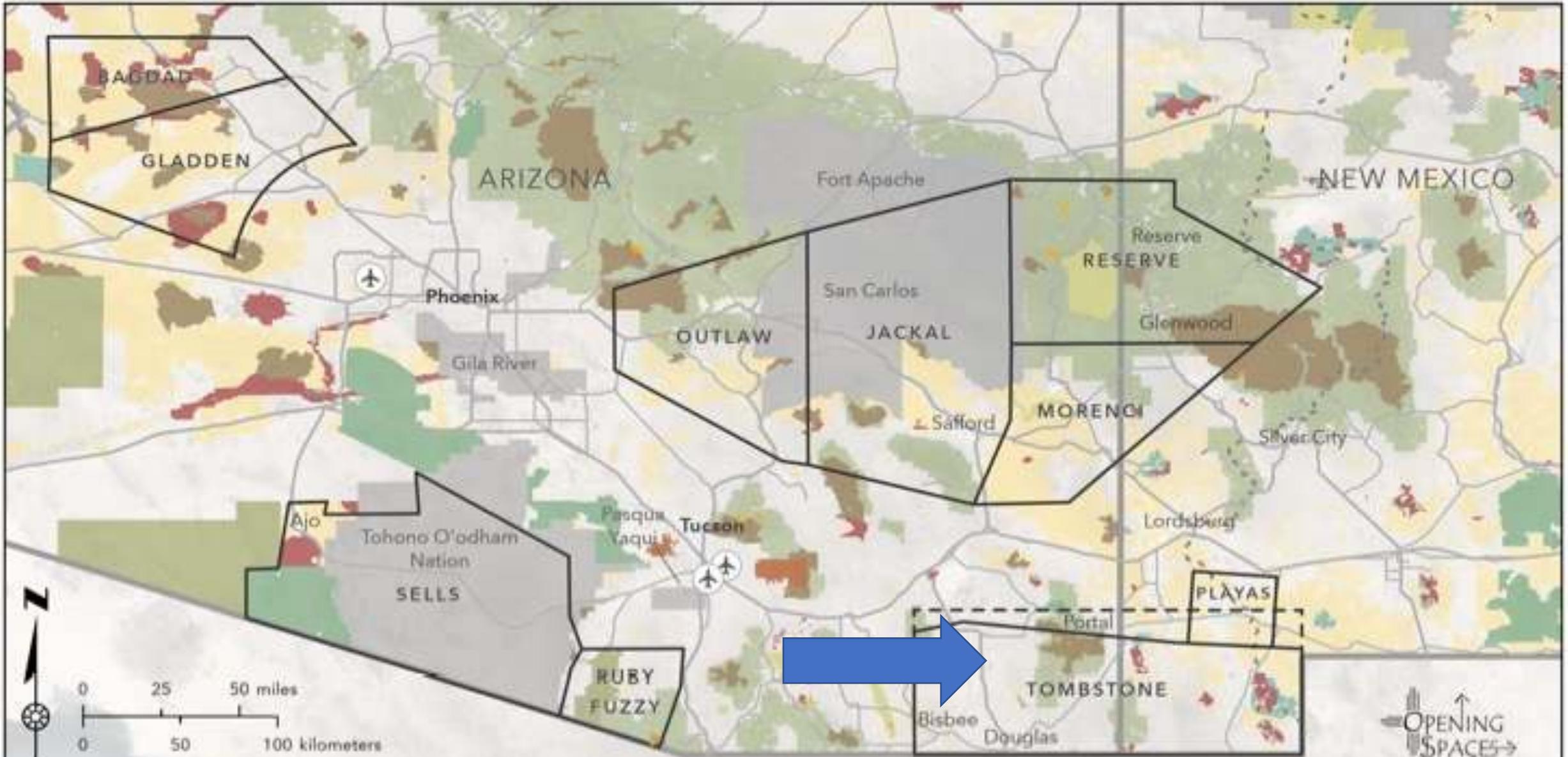
One of 10 Existing  
"Military Operations Areas" in Southeast AZ



### Legend

★ In-Person Public Meeting Location

# PROPOSED TOMBSTONE MOA BOUNDARY EXPANSION TO INCLUDE PORTAL AND PLAYAS



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Created for Boreal AGU. This is a general educational purpose by Opening Spaces, February 2023. Additional sources: USDOI, BIA, FWS, EPA

**ANOTHER FACTOR TO CONSIDER.....**

# **MILITARY TRAINING ROUTES:**

## **VR'S OR SAFETY SACRIFICE ZONES?**

**Did you know there are already areas in the Chiricahuas where military flights are allowed to fly 100 feet above ground level?**

The map displays Cochise County with various military visual routes (VR) and the Tombstone MOA boundary. The routes are color-coded: blue for VR-263 A-B 700, VR-263 A-B 100, VR-263 C-B 300, VR-263 C-D 300, VR-263 G-H 100, VR-263 J-K 100, VR-263 H-I 0, VR-269 D-E 300, and VR-260 D-E 300. The Tombstone MOA boundary is shown as a red dashed line. Key locations include Benson, Tombstone, Sierra Vista, and Cave Creek Canyon. The map also shows the Willcox Range, Fort-Bowie N.H.S., Chiricahua N.M., and Coronado N.F.

**USAF / FAA JOINTLY REGULATED  
MILITARY "VISUAL ROUTES"  
in Cochise County**

**CAVE CREEK  
CANYON**

**RODEO**

**Tombstone MOA Boundary**

**SIERRA  
VISTA**

**SPECIAL  
MILITARY  
TRAINING  
ROUTES NOT  
SUBJECT TO  
TOMBSTONE  
MOA  
REGULATIONS**

**Flights a low as  
100-300 feet  
Above Ground**

**HOW CLOSELY DOES THE FAA  
MONITOR USAF SPEEDS/ALTITUDES  
OUTSIDE MOAs?**

**Report ALL MILITARY FLIGHTS to USAF**

**USAF NOISE COMPLAINT FORM:**

<https://peacefulchiricahuaskies.com/report>

## Sen. Mark Kelly (AZ) Calls for Connecting Military Airspace over SE Arizona

Sierra Vista, AZ— “The military needs more contiguous airspace. We have different chunks of airspace all over Southern Arizona. I’m trying to figure out a way to connect all of these areas so that a pilot can use all of this space. They can all be contiguous. We have the ability to do that now and this is the ideal place to do it.”

— Senator Mark Kelly (AZ) during interview with Sierra Vista *Herald Review* on April 4, 2023  
Sen. Kelly is Chair of the Airland Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee

See <https://peacefulchiricahuaskies.com/action/write-kelly>

For sample letters and Senator Kelly’s address

# AVAILABLE ALTERNATIVE TRAINING AIR SPACE

## **White Sands Missile Range, NM.**

3,200 Square. Miles of sprawling airspace

## **Yuma Proving Ground, AZ**

1,300 square miles. The world's biggest military installation and airspace testing ground

## **Marine Corps Air Station, AZ**

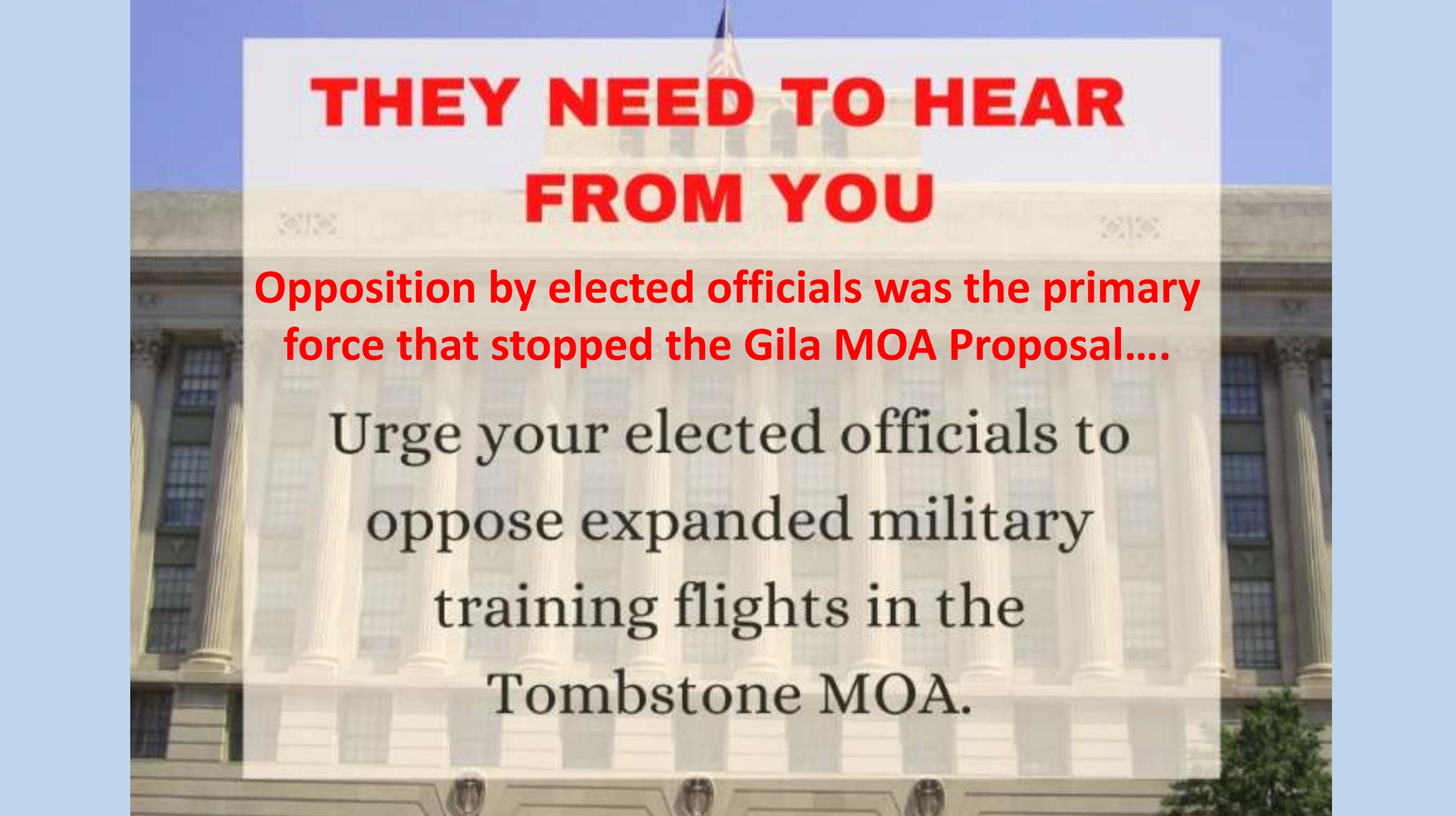
3,000 acres of military airspace

## **Barry M. Goldwater Range, AZ**

Millions of acres, multiple aircraft testing areas

## **Camp Navajo Army Base, AZ**

44 square miles. Biggest military installation in AZ



# **THEY NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU**

**Opposition by elected officials was the primary  
force that stopped the Gila MOA Proposal....**

Urge your elected officials to  
oppose expanded military  
training flights in the  
Tombstone MOA.

# **KEEP REPORTING ALL NUISANCE FLIGHTS!**

**Federal Aviation Regulation 91.119 specifies that aircraft may not be operated closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure.**

**THIS RULE IS CONSTANTLY VIOLATED**

**Some complaints to USAF have received responses revealing new information such as location of “MILITARY TRAINING ROUTES”**



**F-16 within  
minimum  
500' distance  
requirement  
from any  
building or  
person**

(Cave Creek  
Canyon near  
Portal, AZ)

Photo: R. Wyatt Mendez,  
July 28, 2022

# THE NEW PROPOSAL

## COMPARISON OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED TOMBSTONE MOA FLIGHT REGULATIONS

### USAF Preferred Alternative #2

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>EXISTING REGULATIONS</u>	<u>PROPOSED REGULATIONS*</u>
TIME OF OPERATIONS:	6AM - 9PM Daily	6AM - 9PM Daily
LOWEST FLIGHT ALTITUDE:	500 Feet ABOVE GROUND	<b>100 feet Above Ground</b>
LOWEST SUPERSONIC FLIGHT:	30,000 Feet ABOVE GROUND	<b>5,000 feet Above Ground</b>
LOWEST FLARE RELEASE:	5,000 Feet ABOVE GROUND	<b>2,000 feet Above Ground</b>
LOWEST CHAFF RELEASE:	NOT ALLOWED	<b>2,000 Feet Above Ground</b>
FLIGHTS OVER PORTAL, AZ:	NOT ALLOWED	<b>ALLOWED (boundary expanded)</b>

\* Alternative #1

No Action Alternative

Alternative #2

Preferred Alternative (see above)

Alternative #3

Identical to #2 except no boundary expansion to include Portal, AZ

Alternative #4

Identical to #2 except the Lowest Supersonic Flight is increased to 10,000 feet above ground from 5,000 feet

# Effects of Expanded Military Air Operations in the Chiricahua-Peloncillo Region

## **What are the benefits for local residents and communities?**

- No Tangible Benefits Reported by USAF At Animas Public Meeting

## **What are the negatives for local residents and communities?**

- Loss of environmental quality (peace and quiet, Loss of solitude in the wild)
- Stress on personal health and well-being, loss of privacy
- Reduction in real estate values due to high-decibel noise from low-elevation flights
- Reduction in tourism due to disruption of tranquility by low-elevation flights
- Disruption of livestock and wildlife activities due to extreme noise levels.
- Increased risk of wildfires from flares, crashes
- Biodiversity damage from chaff releases
- Damage to structures caused by sonic booms

# **SPEAK UP!**

**TELL YOUR NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS  
TO GET INVOLVED!**

**PROTECT COMMUNITIES & WILDERNESS  
FROM DANGEROUS AIR FORCE TRAINING**



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

**REPORT** EVERY NUISANCE FLIGHT YOU SEE WITH AN EASY FORM:

<https://peacefulchiricahuaskies.com/report>

**ASK** ELECTED OFFICIALS / AGENCY DIRECTORS TO OPPOSE THE PLAN

**WRITE** LETTERS TO EDITORS OF REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS

**SPREAD** THE WORD ON YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

**VISIT** [peacefulchiricahuaskies.com](https://peacefulchiricahuaskies.com)

**SIGN THE PETITION!**

**ADD YOUR NAME TO OUR MAILING LIST FOR LATEST UPDATES**

**GET SAMPLE LETTERS, WHO TO WRITE TO, BACKGROUND DETAILS**

# TWO WAYS TO REPORT ALL NUISANCE FLIGHTS

**USE THE PCS ON-LINE “NOISE COMPLAINT FORM”**

<https://peacefulchiricahuaskies.com/report>

**EMAIL OR CALL IN COMPLAINT to PCS**

[<peacefulchiricahuaskies@gmail.com>](mailto:peacefulchiricahuaskies@gmail.com)

520-369-3503



# Nuisance Flight Report Form

This report will be sent to the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and the Arizona Air National Guard, with copies to your own email address and to Peaceful Chiricahua Skies

Name\*

first, last name

Address

your street address

City

State

Zip Code

Phone

Email\*

Complaint Type\*

- Low level flight
- Excessive noise
- Flight frequency
- Other

Date (of incident)

mm/dd/yyyy

Time (of incident)

--:-- --

See [peacefulchiricahuaskies.com](http://peacefulchiricahuaskies.com)  
for full report form



**Easy-To-Use  
NUISANCE  
FLIGHT REPORT FORM  
On PCS Website:  
[Peacefulchiricahuaskies.com](http://Peacefulchiricahuaskies.com)**

**Reports automatically forwarded  
to appropriate airbase**

**GET A FLIGHT TRACKER APPLICATION:  
[FlightRadar24](#) or [FlightAware](#)**

*Don't take paradise  
for granted.*

**Take Action**  
SIGN THE PETITION

[peacefulchiricahuaskies.com](http://peacefulchiricahuaskies.com)



<https://www.zazzle.com/store/pcsstore>

**SPREAD THE WORD!**

# DONATE TO PROTECT OUR PEACEFUL SKIES

Through PCS's fiscal agent

**Chiricahua Regional Council**

[www.chiricahuaregionalcouncil.org](http://www.chiricahuaregionalcouncil.org)

**For Detailed Information on How You Can Help:**

[www.peacefulchiricahuaskies.com](http://www.peacefulchiricahuaskies.com)



Thank You....  
QUESTIONS?



[Peacefulchiricahuaskies.com](http://Peacefulchiricahuaskies.com)  
<[peacefulchiricahuaskies@gmail.com](mailto:peacefulchiricahuaskies@gmail.com)>  
520-369-3503  
P.O. Box 16147, Portal, AZ 85632