

I am writing to submit comments on the Arizona Regional Airspace Draft EIS.

I take particular issue with the idea that supersonic flights as low as 5,000 ft above ground are safe.

The US Government in 1973 decided that supersonic flights that were typically between 30,000 ft and 60,000 ft were unsafe and a nuisance too burdensome for the US citizenry.

A sonic boom at 5,000 ft creates a shockwave five times the strength of one at 30,000 feet. Before 1973 people experienced broken windows and structural damage to their homes from sonic booms at 30,000 ft. It's grossly unfair to subject the residents of the MOA to five times the hazard the entire US population has been spared for the last fifty years.

I noticed the DEIS indicates issues for canyons and structures from low-level super sonic flight might be visible. I assume the people writing this had a good chuckle. What you are saying is that there is damage, but not structural. At a minimum the DEIS should be amended to indicate what kinds of visible damage is to be expected? Broken windows? Parts falling off of buildings? Landslides in canyons? Collapsed caves? Are there plans to compensate the residence of the MOA for the visible damage to their property?

I take issue with the notion there will not be structural damage to homes. In 1973, structural damage to homes was a consideration when sonic booms were created at 30,000 ft and higher. Building codes have improved since then, but the MOA is in a rural area and homes are kept longer without the pressure of high property values ensuring that old buildings get replaced with new ones. Although in general the building codes have become stricter, but rural areas often make exceptions. In Cochise, AZ, a large portion of the Tombstone MOA, you can build one structure per property without inspections. The DEIS makes no mention of how the owners of structures will be compensated for the ruined property.

It is unlikely anyone but the Air Force can do actual studies of the affects of 5,000 ft supersonic flights. The DEIS indicates the lack of studies proving that 5,000 ft supersonic flight is harmful suggests they are safe. Given that the Air Force is the only one that could facilitate such a study, it should be incumbent on the Air Force to do these studies rather than saying we're doing these flights unless someone can prove they are unsafe.

No one knows these supersonic are safe for the land or for its inhabitants, humans, animals and plants. Proceeding on the basis that without proof otherwise it's safe, is woefully ignorant.

Confining the supersonic flights to Barry Goldwater is a much better alternative than hoping the Air Force is not doing irreparable damage previously pristine lands.