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LAND, AGRICULTURE &  
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TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 8

February 28, 2022

The Honorable Frank Kendall III  
Secretary of the U.S. Air Force  
1690 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The undersigned bi-partisan members of the Arizona House of Representatives write to express our concern about the U.S. Air Force proposal to allow planes/jets to perform training missions by flying at supersonic speeds at an elevation of 5,000 feet over rural communities in southeastern Arizona. Currently they may not and should not fly lower than 30,000 feet under current rules.

We believe that training missions are essential to the military in maintaining a “ready” defense but in carrying out these training missions, pilot shoot flares to practice confusing enemy radar in tracking their planes and other objectives.

On June 4, 2021, the day the Telegraph Fire started, Airforce planes were seen over the Tonto National Forest. The fire started in an area that is commonly used by recreationists for camping or hiking. The Forest Service reported the fire was human caused, without providing further detail. However, the U.S. Air Force confirmed that its planes were flying over the forest that day but reported that no plane flew lower than 11,700 feet and that any flare dropped from that altitude would have burned out before reaching the ground. This is still under investigation.

The military should consider conditions related to fire restrictions during the time frames of when local, state and federal fire restrictions are in place and suspend the use of these “flares” or any other munitions that may spark a wildfire in the state of Arizona.

“The Air Force would also seek to drop flares from 2,000 feet above the ground, rather than 5,000 feet. “

Our state has suffered a number of devastating fires in recent years. We are suffering from one of the most severe droughts in recorded history. It is reckless for the U.S. Air Force to put our communities, citizens, and natural resources at further risk by proposing to fly training sessions at 2,000 feet during which flares could be dropped.

We ask you to bar the use of flares below 5,000 feet in training sessions and not allow their use during fire restrictions when enacted in the state.

"The Air Force will also lower the altitude for supersonic speeds down to 5,000 feet above ground level in the Tombstone, Outlaw, Jackal, Morenci, and Reserve areas, down from 30,000 feet above sea level now."

We ask for you to maintain a level of 25,000 during supersonic speeds.

"Jets that don't break the sound barrier will also be allowed to fly as low as 100 feet above ground level in the Tombstone MOA, and at 500 feet above ground level in the Outlaw, Jackal, Bagdad, and Gladden MOA".

We ask that the military maintain an elevation of 1,000 feet.

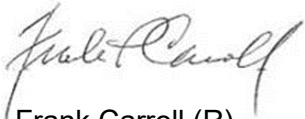
Thank you for your consideration of our views.



David Cook (R)  
Representative, District 8




Walter "Walt" Blackman (R)  
Representative, District 6




Frank Carroll (R)  
Representative, District 22



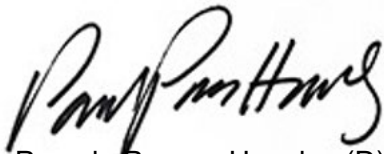
Rebecca Rios (D)  
Senate Democratic Leader  
Senator, District 27



John Fillmore (R)  
Representative, District 16



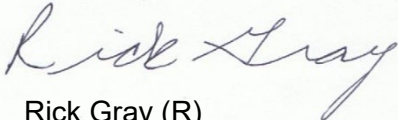
Brian Fernandez (D)  
Representative, District 4



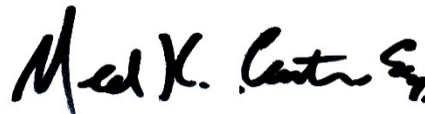
Pamela Powers Hannley (D)  
Representative, District 9



Mark Finchem (R)  
Representative, District 11



Rick Gray (R)  
Senate Majority Leader  
Senator, District 21



Neal Carter (R)  
Representative, District 8



Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren (D)  
Representative, District 7



Kelly Townsend (R)  
Senator, District 16



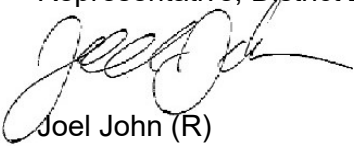
Marcelino Quiñonez (D)  
Representative, District 27



John Kavanagh (R)  
Representative, District 23



Kevin Payne (R)  
Representative, District 21




Joel John (R)  
Representative, District 4



Andrés Cano (D)  
Representative, District 3



Richard Andrade (D)  
Representative, District 29



Tim Dunn (R)  
Representative, District 13



Thomas "T.J." Shope (R)  
Senator, District 8