

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2015

Secretary Anthony Foxx
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

We would like to express our serious concerns regarding the threat of bird strikes at our nation's airports and the status of the deployment of avian radar technology. According to the Federal Aviation Administration's own reporting, at least one plane each day is required to divert a landing due to bird strikes. This threat has brought about increased costs to industry and has resulted in 24 deaths and 235 injuries in the United States since 1988. We believe that incorporating bird-detection radar into current mitigation practices has the potential to reduce the occurrence of bird strikes and increase overall aviation safety, and we urge you to increase efforts to fully implement this technology at every airport.

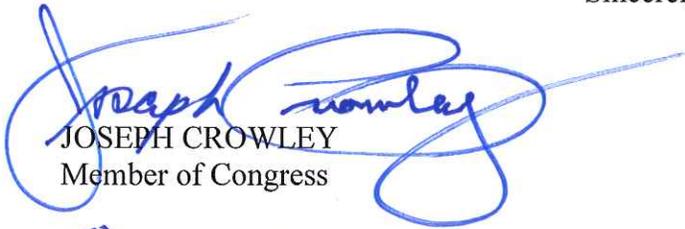
There are few ways to effectively and humanely mitigate hazards posed by wildlife near airports, and avian radar systems present one of the best options. Given the significant threat bird strikes pose to flight safety, we are concerned that an important preventive tool is not being utilized at civilian airports, which see thousands of flights and millions of individuals come and go each day. When avian radar is integrated with air traffic control, it can be a real-time warning system for bird activity near airports and can reduce the frequency of strikes. Avian radar systems are currently in use both internationally and domestically, including at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, but should be greatly expanded to be used at all airports in the U.S.

While bird strikes can happen at any time during a flight, the majority of incidences occur during takeoffs and landings, which is also when flights are most vulnerable. Management of wildlife near airports can somewhat reduce the risk of a strike, but current practices, such as shooting or poisoning large flocks of birds, have proven largely ineffective. This is highlighted by a five-fold increase in the number of wildlife strikes over the past two decades.

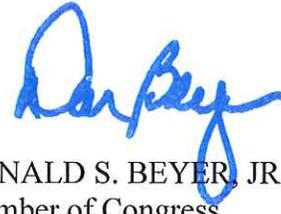
In 2010, the FAA published an Advisory Circular on the use of avian radar systems to supplement airports' Wildlife Hazard Mitigation Plans. However, use of advanced bird-detection radar technology is still virtually nonexistent at civilian airports. While we understand that the technology has not been fully perfected, we strongly encourage your agency to prioritize investment in improving and deploying avian radar technology. Reducing the frequency of avian strikes is crucial to improving the safety of air travel, and it must be a top priority.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to improve traveler safety.

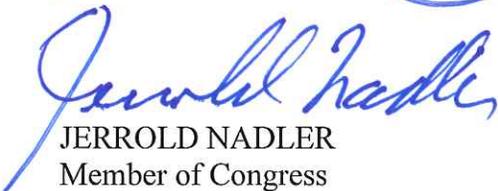
Sincerely,



JOSEPH CROWLEY
Member of Congress



DONALD S. BEYER, JR.
Member of Congress



JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress



ROBERT A. BRADY
Member of Congress



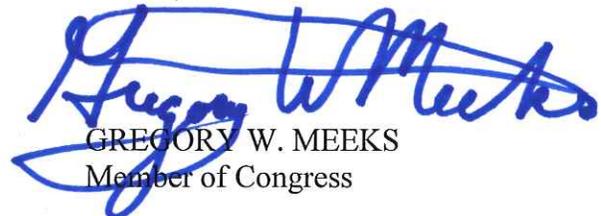
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
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