

EDITORIALS

Expedite plan to reduce jet noise

North Shore communities 20 miles or more from Kennedy Airport are hearing more noise from aircraft in the last several months. Flight patterns have changed due to the NextGen effort to improve air-traffic safety nationwide, and because of construction at Kennedy that is expected to continue through November.

Now, the Federal Aviation Administration must take steps to quiet the skies, particularly above communities nowhere close to the airport.

The solution is there. Rep. Thomas Suozzi worked with local FAA officials and air traffic control personnel to come up with regulations that would increase the minimum elevation of flights west of Deer Park from about 2,000 to 4,000 feet, and which would change altitude requirements when a key Kennedy runway is closed for landings.

Initially, those new rules were supposed to be in place this week. But days after Suozzi announced the plan, the FAA put the brakes on it, saying the new rules “require additional internal evaluation.” That could include an environmental review and additional assessments. There can’t be any more delays. Suozzi and other elected officials should work with the FAA to address any last-minute concerns but make sure the review is completed quickly.

Meanwhile, more than two dozen other congressional representatives last week requested that the Government Accountability Office study how the FAA is assessing noise levels and communicating with the public during the NextGen project. There are too many discrepancies between the FAA’s findings and local concerns. That’s troubling and must be resolved. With new guidelines and a better understanding of the community impacts, some quiet can be restored.

— *The editorial board*