



Who We Are

A group of local residents is slowly but steadily working its way through the San Mateo County small claims court system to put pressure on the City and County of San Francisco to execute its legal responsibility to investigate and mitigate the excessive runway back blast that began almost 5 years ago.

Any resident over the age of 18 who is affected by the noise may participate provided his/her home or apartment was never insulated by San Francisco Airport's noise abatement program.

What We've Done

We followed the precedent of a community group who filed repeatedly in small claims court until the airport felt the pressure. (Full story on sforunwaynoise.com, "more" tab; "precedent-setting case".)

Round One Summary: Both the small claims judge and the superior court judge ruled that **compensation is owed** for the ongoing public nuisance that a superior court judge said was caused by a runway project completed by the end of 2015.

Round Two Summary: The final testimony was January 21, 2020. We await the judge's verdict.

Round Three Has Begun

The first set of directions can be found at sforunwaynoise.com under "paperwork". The time from the mailing of the first (non-committal) paperwork to an actual court appearance could take several months.

You may be able to coordinate your appearance date with like-minded people, or you may appear on your own. One spouse may represent both spouses.

Why You Should Consider Taking the First Step Now

From the time when the first papers are mailed to the City of San Francisco until the Redwood City court appearance, months will pass. Mailing in the papers *now* allows you to file in small claims court within 7 months should you decide to become involved later.

Summary of Key Superior Court Judge Comments at Conclusion of Round One Appeals January 28, 2020

Note: recording of court comments are not allowed; no transcriptions are available for the public; what follows is taken from rapidly written notes.

What caught the judge's attention was that during the exact period of time the noise started (end of 2015/beginning of 2016) , the (airport's noise boundaries) map showed expanding noise contours. The judge said that's significant. She saw an increase in the noise level in those maps.

We (plaintiffs) have lived in the area for decades. The judge accepts without doubt that we've suffered in significant change in quality of living.

The noise isn't from aviation space. The change is coming from the ground.

The changes occurred at SFO reasonably close in time to our complaints. We've proven (during) this appeal that the changes in noise were the result of changes at the airport. It's remarkable that the back blast (sounds) came after the changes.

Comments made by a witness for the City and County of San Francisco (taken from rapidly written notes).

After runways were altered in 2014, the airport cautiously and slowly built up the runway traffic during 2015. It wasn't until the end of 2015 that the runways returned to full use.

(Before the above comment was made by the defense's witness, one plaintiff had remarked that she first heard the back blast noise in the last week of November, 2015. Another plaintiff had remarked in Round One that he first heard the runway noise in the middle of 2015.)

What Is Taking So Long?

Several factors are at work.

- ~ The first set of (non-committal) claim papers takes almost 2 months to be processed;
- ~ once small court papers are filed, it takes a week or two for that department to assign appearance dates;
- ~ said dates are 3- to 7-weeks away;
- ~ the City of San Francisco may request a last-minute postponement that moves the appearance another month or so away*;
- ~ appearances are once a week for a few weeks;
- ~ the judge may postpone announcing his/her verdict for another several weeks;
- ~ a month after that, the City of San Francisco may file an appeal scheduled for months away.*

Sometimes in court cases one side will engage in a “war of attrition”, where steps are taken to lower the determination of the other side to the point where the number of participants diminishes.

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