

CITIZENS OF EBHEY'S RESERVE

protecting our land, homes, and health

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Congressman Criticized over Proposals to Reduce Navy 'Growler' Jet Noise

Congressman Rick Larson's Proposals Criticized as "Non-Solutions"

Coupeville, WA - Congressman Rick Larsen, who boasts of his role in bringing controversial 'Growler' Navy Jets to Washington's Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, is being criticized for the noise reduction plans he announced at his March 30 standing-room only Coupeville 'Town Hall Meeting.' Larson revealed his plans after listening as tearful and angry residents complained about noise-related health and property damages.

The Navy's EA18-G Growlers are home-based at Whidbey Island's Naval Air Station and are the loudest jets ever to fly. They have become a source of noise complaints in seven counties from throughout the Puget Sound region.

At his previous Town Hall Meeting in Coupeville, Larsen refused even to discuss Growler issues, prompting most of those in attendance to walk out. Larson since acknowledged receiving a large number of complaints from his constituents. "We are glad our Congressman came back to hear our concerns, but very disappointed in his failure to propose meaningful solutions, said Ken Pickard, of the Citizens of Ebey's Reserve (COER).

Larsen listened as citizens pleaded for help, but reiterated his unwavering support for keeping Growlers at Whidbey and for their low-flying training exercises. Growler training that he supports includes 'Electromagnetic Warfare Training over the Olympic National Forest and Park. There are now 82 Growlers on Whidbey, with 26 more expected and a stationary emitter at OLF, Coupeville.

Larsen offered three proposals to reduce jet noise, all of which COER labeled as "non-solutions" designed more to give people false hope and allow the continuation of harmful operations. For instance, a proposed Hush House for Growler maintenance will have minimal noise reduction and ignores the problem of noise from jets in flight. Larson's proposal to have Growlers fly with landing gear raised won't change noisy "touch-and-go" operations that require landing gear be down. Retrofitting Growlers with "Chevrons," which Larsen says is in the discussion phase, was once considered and rejected by the Navy. It would take years to accomplish and fails to significantly reduce noise. *(see attached for detailed COER response)*

When asked at the meeting, Congressman Larsen admitted that he had never heard the low-level touch-and-go noise, yet refused to say if he would change his position if he were given

clear evidence on Growler related health harms. COER continues to provide him and other elected officials with related health studies and information.

“It is telling that Larson voiced support for all things Growler even before a required Environmental Impact Study is completed - and in the face of overwhelming evidence of the harms being caused,” said Greenbank resident and noise victim, Rick Abraham. “Congressman Larsen appears to be in the Navy’s and Boeing’s pocket,” he said. Boeing sells the \$87 million dollar jets to the Navy and contributed to Larson’s campaign.

Members of Citizens of Ebey’s Reserve (COER) will continue to educate the public and our all of elected officials about the impacts of Growler operations said, Maryon Attwood of Coupeville. We are hopeful that the Navy and Congressman Larsen will eventually take steps to protect the people they are supposed to defend and serve.

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COER RESPONSE TO LARSEN’S PROPOSALS

Larsen Proposal: Hush Houses

According to Navy personnel, in 2013 only 120 operations out of 76,000 at NASWI could have used a Hush house to contain noise during Growler maintenance and testing of engines.

Hush houses offer no solution to hazardous noise from flying jets. According to Navy personnel, only 120 operations out of 76,000 at NASWI. As a result, the San Juan's get blasted with Growler noise, day & night.

Larsen Proposal: Growlers fly with landing gear raised to reduce noise.

Growler “touch-and-go” exercises, which Larson acknowledged are the loudest, require that landing gear be down. High flying Growlers with landing gear up, generate noise complaints throughout the Puget Sound region.

Larsen Proposal: Retrofit Growlers with “chevrons” to help reduce noise.

Chevrons cut Growlers noise ONLY by about 2.5 to 3dB and the financial cost is HIGH!

The Navy’s JSF Joint Program Office initiated a study to investigate reducing the F-35 near-field personnel noise and far-field community noise. It was the conclusion of the study that ... at best they only offer a few decibels (dB) of reduction and even less for the peak noise at a distance of 1,000ft from the aircraft.