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July 9, 2019

For Immediate Release: Citizen's Group files Federal Lawsuit against the United States Navy over EA-18G "Growler" Expansion at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island

Today, Citizens of the Ebey's Reserve for a Healthy, Safe and Peaceful Environment ("COER") is filing a complaint in the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington alleging violations of federal law by the United States Navy. The Navy's repetitive landing practice subjects COER's members to painfully loud and frequent noise—louder than a chainsaw one foot away, 45 times or more per hour. At these noise levels, hearing loss can occur after just a few minutes of exposure.

The complaint challenges the Navy's Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") and Record of Decision, alleging violations of the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") and National Historic Preservation Act. Naval Air Station Whidbey Island has already grown well beyond all reasonable limits of compatibility with the surrounding area and community. The Navy's proposed action would add 36 EA-18G "Growler" aircraft at NAS Whidbey Island and greatly increase repetitive landing practice at Outlying Landing Field Coupeville, in close proximity to residences, schools, and Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve.

An EIS is supposed to be an unbiased, full disclosure statement. But the Navy's EIS skews the analysis, understates impacts, and omits discussing measures that could avoid or reduce those impacts. The EIS also failed to analyze an adequate range of alternatives, including the option of locating the Growlers elsewhere.

The Navy's flawed analysis led to it adopting a proposal that would, if implemented:

- Subject local residents to shocking and offensive levels of additional noise, loud enough to cause both temporary and permanent hearing loss and make their homes unfit for human habitation;
- Harass and kill marbled murrelet adults and nestlings, a species listed "Threatened" under the federal Endangered Species Act and "Endangered" under Washington state law; and
- Increase greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft at NAS Whidbey by 40%.

The Navy's jets will roar over Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve at low altitudes dozens of times per hour, shaking windows and rattling walls. The Navy has not made adequate efforts to avoid those impacts. The Navy has rejected recommendations from both the State Historic Preservation Officer and the United States Advisory Council for Historic Preservation to reduce impacts on the National Historic Reserve. The Navy's stubborn, irrational refusal to take steps to protect the Reserve violate the National Historic Preservation Act.

The complaint asks the court to grant the following relief:

- Order, declare, and adjudge that the Navy has violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act;
- Issue a preliminary and final order enjoining the Navy from implementing its proposed action;
- Order the Navy to prepare a supplemental draft EIS and supplemental final EIS that corrects the deficiencies; and
- Order the Navy to withdraw the Record of Decision approving the proposed action.