

# CITIZENS OF EBHEY'S RESERVE

*protecting our land, homes, and health*

**For Immediate Release**

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Federal Judge Jones entered an order today, September 1, 2023, that the Navy must prepare a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for its expanded EA-18G Growler operations at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.

In 2021 Citizens of Ebey's Reserve (COER) and Washington's Attorney General sued the Navy over its failure to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. A year ago, the judge found against the Navy on four counts and ordered the plaintiffs and the Navy to negotiate interim remedies to be in effect until a revised EIS was put in place. Because the Navy rejected all remedies suggested, the plaintiffs recommended that the judge vacate the EIS and thereby return flight operations to prior levels while EIS revisions were being prepared.

The judge's decision upped his initial ruling against the Navy—that is, the Navy had argued they could simply fix the current EIS because the deficiencies were not serious or numerous. The Judge disagreed and called the Navy's failings serious violations of NEPA requiring a new EIS, and noted “[T]his Court found that the Navy ‘selected methods of evaluating data that supported its goal of increasing Growler operations’ and ‘turned a blind eye to data that would not support this intended result.’”

COER fully agrees and hopes the new EIS, this time, forthrightly addresses and reveals the real impacts. The extremely loud carrier landing practice sessions ignite trauma in veterans with PTSD, compromise at-home businesses, interfere with youngsters doing homework and diminish their cognitive function, aggravate dissociative reactions in autistic children, create significant health risks, and diminish and intimidate at-home livability to such an extent that many have been forced to relocate, creating dysfunctional turnover neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, however, the Judge's ruling did not mandate a reduction in carrier landing practice operations at the Coupeville OLF while the new EIS is being prepared (in 2018 the Navy's faulty EIS increased OLF operations fourfold from 6000 to 24,000).

For the sake of thousands of civilians in the Coupeville area who will therefore continue to be hammered by health-debilitating jet noise, COER is consulting with its attorneys to seek clarification from the judge and consider our options, including whether to mount an appeal for their relief.