CITIZENS OF EBEY'S RESERVE

protecting our land, homes, and health

For Immediate Release

August 31, 2026

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On August 26, 2026, Citizens of Ebey's Reserve (COER) petitioned the state's Growth Management Hearing Board to examine Island County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update to determine whether it and its adopted regulations fall substantially short of meeting the goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA)—more specifically whether the land-use strategies need to be strengthened to protect the public from harmful military jet noise.

A 2024 University of Washington study[1] found that over 74,000 people were routinely exposed to harm-level military jet noise from EA-18G Growlers stationed at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, making them "at risk of adverse health effects." In spite of that study and a large body of other new studies linking noise to serious health impacts, the Plan continues to green-light residential development in noise zones that are well above established harm level.

The Plan also failed to address the need to resolve serious question over whether Coupeville's high/middle schools are within or too close to the carrier land practice accident potential zones at the Outlying Field.

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1 Population health implications of exposure to pervasive military aircraft noise pollution. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41370-024-00670-1

Landing practice often goes on for hours, night and day, up to five days a week. As one homeowner explained, "*During practice sessions jets are flying over my home at about 500 to 700 feet every 30 seconds and I feel my skull and organs vibrating each time...I can't even hear myself speak, let alone anyone speaking to me.*"

This is why many discover that living under such conditions is impossible and move out, making neighborhoods highly transient, something the GMA expects counties to discourage.

COER asks the Hearing Board to remand the Plan and implementing regulations to Island County to effect revisions that would make it reasonably compliant with the GMA and begin to mitigate the damage. As COER member, Mark Helpinstall explained, "*For years the County has ignored the noise issue, which is why so many people have and are being harmed. It's time for the county to step up and do something helpful instead allowing things to get worse."*

COER is appealing to the County to apply its influence to persuade the Navy to reassign at least a third of the carrier landing practice to off-island airfields, which they used to do routinely up until about 10 years ago.