

From the Ministries

NO MONEY FOR ENFORCEMENT

A law regulating nighttime noise levels is not being enforced because Hawaii's Department of Health says it has no money to research and set appropriate noise levels or to purchase sound meters. Many had hoped the noise law would become a tool in addressing complaints in mixed-use neighborhoods like Chinatown, where music that comes from nightclubs can be disturbing to nearby residents. "The DOH budget has no funds to implement this measure,"

Director Chiyome Fukino said in a letter to area legislators, saying she does not see implementation of the law "in the near future." According to the letter Fukino sent to area legislators, the department won't enforce the law because it can't afford to buy 10 sound level meters for about \$1,500 each. Also the department ought to do research on whether inaudible sounds have health effects, but cannot afford to do the research.

NOISE MONITORING NETWORK FOR SEVEN CITIES

In a move to ensure compliance with noise regulations, the Indian Central Pollution Control Board has initiated the process of developing a noise monitoring network across the country. Initially, the pollution watchdog plans to install five monitoring stations each in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Lucknow. "We plan to install the 'Real Time Ambient Noise Monitoring' network in seven cities initially. It will consist of 35 stand-alone unmanned remote noise monitoring stations or systems. Five each stations will be installed in each city on pilot basis," CPCB Chairman SP Gautam said. He said the network is likely to be commissioned by October 12 in Delhi while for other cities, its installation is expected to be completed only after October. The network will be extended to 18 more cities in 2011 with

five stations in each of them aiming to help create a baseline data and facilitate its analysis for policy-makers and implementing agencies so that the latter can take appropriate action at regional and national levels. The initiative follows the road map for systematic monitoring of ambient noise levels announced by Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh in January. He called for a systematic monitoring of ambient noise under the National Ambient Monitoring Network Programme (NANMP). The network would help the government better implement the recently amended Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules 2000 according to which the use of construction machines, musical instruments, bursting of noise-emitting firecrackers and horns beyond permissible limits at nights in residential areas have been made punishable offences.

NOISE POLLUTION AFFECTS PUBLIC ORDER

Angola's director of the Inspection and Supervision Office of the Environment Ministry, Francisco Santos, said in Luanda that noise pollution is a public order problem, because it disrupts

society. He said that the co-existence between people is threatened in a social environment because of noise pollution. As every citizen is entitled to well-being and peace, he said, the National Police have the power to act when normal life and public peace are being challenged.

“Based on a notification or verification, the police should go to the site and appeal to turn the music down, and, in case of resistance, remove the stereo-

system from the polluters, if they still resist the police must take tougher measures”, he noted.

AIRLINES CRITICISE GERMAN NOISE TAX

Germany’s plan to introduce an environmental tax of 1 billion euros a year on air travel tickets has met with fierce resistance from airlines, which accused Berlin of making a shortsighted “cash grab” at the expense of an industry still struggling to return to profitability.

“This tax is a body blow to the weak economy and a fragile industry,” said Giovanni Bisignani, chief executive of the International Air Transport Association.

The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, has introduced a major austerity

package aimed at achieving more than 80 billion euros (\$96 billion) in savings by 2014. Alongside deep cuts in spending on defense and social programs, the package also included plans to levy a departure tax on airline tickets, which was expected to vary according to noise levels and fuel consumption.

But airline executives expressed deep skepticism about the initiative’s green intentions, pointing to similar taxes adopted in Britain and Ireland, which, the executives said, had yielded little in terms of concrete steps to reduce carbon emissions.

FRANKFURT AIRPORT: TRYING TO BE QUIETER

In the coming years, Fraport AG’s sustainability policy will focus on the issues of noise monitoring, active noise abatement and noise impact research. Presenting Fraport’s latest sustainability report, Fraport executive board chairman Dr. Stefan Schulte declared the reduction of aviation-related noise emissions to be a major challenge in the near future. “We want to promote reduction of noise nuisance in the region. And we want to better our own noise development forecasts, following completion of Frankfurt Airport’s expansion. Fraport wants to be measured in terms of tangible results,” emphasized Schulte. Schulte called the

noise index introduced by the Forum Flughafen und Region (FFR) an objective gauge for the noise blight situation in the airport vicinity during the day and at night. This scientific parameter will significantly contribute to making the noise nuisance situation in the region transparent and to mapping clearly any changes, in either direction. “More air traffic will, of course, raise the established index value. However, process optimization and development of quieter aircraft can lower the value. We are working intensively toward the goal of achieving reduction potentials and thus clearly undercutting the noise forecasts used in Frankfurt Airport’s zoning procedure,” Schulte stated.

PLANS TO TACKLE AIRPORT NOISE A SHAM?

Airport ‘noise action plans’ will fail to tackle impacts on local communities, a study by environmental campaigners has found. European laws designed to help protect communities from noise impacts now demand large airports – as

well as roads, railways and built-up areas – to draw up ‘action plans’ for tackling their noise pollution. But campaigners say that the plans written by airports mainly just restate what they already have to do to comply with local planning requirements, or, at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, because of rules put in

place by the Government.

The Aviation Environment Federation, a campaign group representing people living near the UK's airports and airfields, has reviewed all the airport draft noise action plans and concluded that not one meets all the requirements of the EC law. The Government now has to decide whether to accept the plans or to send them back.

AEF Deputy Director Cait Weston said: "We weren't expecting great things from the noise action plans. The demands made by the regulation are pretty flimsy. There's no standard set for what noise is unacceptable, for example – unless there are restrictions imposed by the planning authority or by the Government, airports can decide that for themselves. And airports will also be in charge of monitoring the effectiveness of their actions. So they

can pretty much say what they like in these plans.

"So what surprised us was the extent to which airports have failed even to comply with the weak demands of the EU's legislation. Airports had to make 'noise maps', for example, and base their action plans on the maps. But most have just repeated whatever actions they were taking before producing the maps. At Heathrow, the noise maps produced under the EC law show 725,500 people in the affected area, but the actions the airport has proposed to deal with noise relate to the 57 Decibel contour, which covers only 258,500 people. It's a massive difference."

More info: Cait Weston, Aviation
Environment Federation
Tel: +44(0)20 7248 2223
E-mail: cait@aef.org.uk

NEW ISO STANDARD FOR REDUCING NOISE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF AIRPORTS

The new standard ISO 20906:2009, Acoustics – Unattended monitoring of aircraft sound in the vicinity of airports, will help regulators, professionals and researchers in their effort to reduce noise in the vicinity of airports.

This International Standard gives requirements for reliable measurement of aircraft sound. It describes a threshold system of sound event recognition in a complex sound environment with multiple aircraft and other sound sources. ISO 20906:2009 specifies:

- The typical application for a permanently installed sound-monitoring system around an airport

- Performance specifications for instruments and requirements for their unattended installation and operation, in order to determine continuously monitored sound pressure levels of aircraft sound at selected locations
- Requirements for monitoring the sound of aircraft operations at an airport
- Requirements for the quantities to be determined in order to describe the sound of aircraft operations
- Requirements for data to be reported and frequency of publication of reports
- A procedure for determining the expanded uncertainty of the reported data in accordance with ISO/IEC Guide 98-3, Uncertainty of measurement – Part 3: Guide to the expression of uncertainty in measurement (GUM: 1995).

Unpaid noise fines of \$137,000

More than three hundred people ticketed for blaring their music too loud owe the city of Springfield (IL) about \$136,800. Most date back several years, but only four people owe more than \$1,000 apiece in noise fines. Each of those four received multiple tickets, sometimes all the in same year. Currently, a first offender is fined \$250 for blaring his or her car stereo too loud. If an administrative court hearing is held, \$50 in court costs are added. A second violation within a year carries a fine of \$500 to \$750. For a third violation, the car is towed.

£1000 FINE FOR PARTYING TOO LONG

A Didcot landlord has been landed with a £1,000 bill after a party taking place at his pub went on almost two hours longer than the licence allowed. Steven Whiting, licence holder for the Woodman Inn, pleaded guilty at Didcot Magistrates' Court to staging an unauthorised licensable activity at his premises after 1am on 12 April 2009. Mr Whiting was prosecuted by the Vale of White Horse District Council after an Environmental Health Officer received a complaint from a local resident about "loud amplified music" coming from the pub at 1.45 am on the Sunday morning. This was 45 minutes after the licensed period of the Temporary Event Notice, which Mr Whiting had successfully applied for at an earlier date from the Vale, had ended. The Environmental Health Officer drove to the Woodman Inn at 2.15am and was clearly able to hear the amplified sound from outside the premises, and could still do so until the music stopped around 30 minutes later. The officer deemed that the noise had amounted to a statutory nuisance and therefore issued Mr Whiting with a noise abatement notice. Whiting was formally interviewed by Licensing officers in May 2009 when he maintained that the event had finished by the licensed cut off point of 1am. As this was in conflict with the evidence gathered by the council and a statement provided by the witness, the Vale was left with no alternative but to prosecute.

