

MY TURN

Where were state officials at Air Force forums?

CAROL MILLER
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Fourteen of the 17 so-called "community forums" organized by Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis, N.M., have been held, the final three meetings will be held this week. Many speakers at the meetings have testified that the Air Force failed to provide appropriate outreach and publicity for these meetings resulting in less than optimal attendance.

Because of networking and publicity by active citizen groups, and despite the lack of publicity by the air force, hundreds of people have come to these meetings. County commissioners, mayors, city managers and other local government officials have attended the meetings. Staff members of congressional representatives have attended the meetings.

But one group of elected officials has not attended — state legislators and other state government officials. Their absence and apparent lack of interest in this massive militarization of southwest Colorado and Northern New Mexico shows complete disrespect for their constituents.

Ranchers, local governments, tribes, environmentalists, volunteer fire departments, peace activists, biologists, physicists, farmers, veterans, business owners and others have united in opposition to this plan. With hundreds speaking against and only a handful speaking in favor, are state government leaders hiding from their constituents?

Biologists have explained the ways the environmental assessment (EA) fails to address the effects of low altitude flights on wildlife, range animals and humans.

A physicist has testified how the EA fails to include known impacts of sound on wildlife, range, animals, humans and buildings.

Business people and tourism industry representatives have testified on negative economic impacts which are expected as a result of having a low altitude flying and spying operation taking place overhead most nights of the year.

Retired military pilots have testified that this scheme is both unnecessary and wasteful.

Where are the state elected officials and why have they ignored their constituents?

We urge people to ask this question of legislators. If their answer is to brush off the concerns of the public, voters are asked to remember that when the next election rolls around.

Peaceful Skies Coalition urges the public to contact the New Mexico and Colorado

Congressional Delegations to request three things:

- Extend the public comment period for 60 days.
- Demand a full EIS before flights begin.
- Enact a funding ban for this project. The deadline for public comment is currently Nov. 5 and many members of the public have not even heard of the plan or the comment period currently underway. That is why a 60-day extension of the comment period is essential.

Carol Miller is a member of the Peaceful Skies Coalition.