Whidbey News-Times Letter: Exposure to jet noise may have damaging effects

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**Editor,**

Noise exposure from military jets has long been shown to cause a significant increase in blood pressure and “shock” to the body.

If noise rises and subsides quickly, such as occurs with low-level flights where there are multiple jets flying one after the other, a person’s blood pressure does not return to the pre-noise level and continues to climb higher and higher. This is shown in a published, peer-reviewed study: acute circulatory effects of military low-altitude flight noise of combat jet noise.

This effect happens regularly in Oak Harbor and Coupeville.

Recent studies on environmental noise exposure and health outcomes have found associations with annoyance; cardiovascular effects; obesity and metabolic effects, such as diabetes; cognitive impairment; sleep disturbance; hearing impairment and tinnitus; adverse birth outcomes; and quality of life, mental health and well being.

Noise impacts mean lost days of work, lost hours in our schools and lost years of life. This is supported by science, extensive research, and multiple studies around the world that include recognizable credible entities such as the state Health Department, World Heath Organization and Environmental Protection Agency.

Noise is measured in decibels. The dB scale runs from the faintest sound the human ear can detect, 0 dB, to over 180 dB, the noise at a rocket launch. Crickets singing on a summer evening produce a noise level of about 40 dB and a high-speed Growler jet flying overhead at low altitudes can produce as much as 120-130 dBs. That may sound like the jet is only three times as loud as the crickets, but decibels are measured in powers of 10. Put another way — every time a noise is doubled, there’s only an increase of three decibels.

The EPA explains that, if someone in a 24-hour period is exposed to 1.5 minutes of noise over 100 dB, they will experience permanent hearing loss. JGL, an independent noise expert, found one 36-minute session of 28 jet overflights at Rhododendron Park in Coupeville exposed occupants to two minutes, 15 seconds of noise at 100-114 dB, nearly twice the EPA hearing-loss threshold.

Jet noise measured throughout Puget Sound shows that Growler noise regularly exceeds the safe guidelines of the EPA and WHO. Science and facts tell the story – jet noise is a public health issue.

We all must advocate for no new jets and no new flights. Public health demands it.

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