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| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Image removed by sender.     UK Stakeholder |  | |  | | --- | | **[aef: Night noise regime at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted extended to 2017](http://mmail.dods.co.uk/wf/click?upn=PUcZOS6-2FNT4PrY23eS-2B6NzBfsdvqTeU5dcR-2F818NKWDvXQHxX1YFH2-2Fsh1lc32rXIVrdWgLdcMYDzPWeFLTsRlINICTvUedUW3a6Elarrqe20EDGiS-2BdjmwOeCwDwotgyYYWJW9SP1PawSF4gwuMyw-3D-3D_XU2HhMdYrXJl18MWM9Uanquo-2BzTce-2Btt9eh6OmBAKl8D94m7nRjOyVHXBqYo-2Bh2VjgRMoLhT9LBUTU7gebdepd5uWhlDLmEDSLGy78CZtHbQnpJeA2RVQ1exwHMyFcNDa0Iy0wTuglYh-2F0mJ706bgbeOKa18-2FOkXhzrG7oCZ53vWhA4iUhB8J0MB97keKow4s2bk7OLc5EuE9EtBXM-2FWEA-3D-3D)** | | *UK Stakeholder - Press Releases* | | [11/08/2014](http://mmail.dods.co.uk/wf/click?upn=NVLSxtkvQ-2FKNk5BVwFZSOBCHDyJtKkKL04COAHZMICIeCUwcWDjPu2SeJcTuAMxbqIGtfA2AVq5UGXovfsCvqw-3D-3D_XU2HhMdYrXJl18MWM9Uanquo-2BzTce-2Btt9eh6OmBAKl8D94m7nRjOyVHXBqYo-2Bh2VHArvSGDSEjkcmU8RwyrkYskQEeEXSU-2BJ0nOUxcHcTOvZLQVGEUqhIrNOwknFD4XsrCIQMKi7VcpEG4BgcZ-2BG5yg5SzPf5EI9TezafqE6-2BeCVVY8I-2BvXdSp-2Fna9-2BRstl-2Fc6VOVIv1ftMRXuU6Yh54qA-3D-3D) | |
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| **The Government has** [**announced**](http://mmail.dods.co.uk/wf/click?upn=bq9iL-2FG44uH5u4EXDGxRuyD7mdmu1wRLIHVyPEY98Bs-3D_XU2HhMdYrXJl18MWM9Uanquo-2BzTce-2Btt9eh6OmBAKl8D94m7nRjOyVHXBqYo-2Bh2VNiOvoeMGaxn49Z5wWB6J-2FklgjdGrizyCYBduoOl4pt2v24qa2IA3rCt3RH14F2tB1g9un8r7qQmPMk-2FnETfx1xOd6ohcbUN5qqEIUmx0UvhQpT5k0pIVleMl-2BtfTedDN18O8wchG4p-2Fzt7Q0nBC0AA-3D-3D) **that it will make no substantive changes to the current regime for night flights at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports until 2017, despite the consultation for the proposed regime eliciting 1,100 responses (1,020 from the public) in early 2014:** [**http://bit.ly/XW0D0U**](http://mmail.dods.co.uk/wf/click?upn=bq9iL-2FG44uH5u4EXDGxRuyD7mdmu1wRLIHVyPEY98Bs-3D_XU2HhMdYrXJl18MWM9Uanquo-2BzTce-2Btt9eh6OmBAKl8D94m7nRjOyVHXBqYo-2Bh2VOBIyCDwld7SJFLlTDxBvFSe3uyqAWXCX8x-2BQxF-2FfsKINTUj-2BSEcBSKMUoStyD-2FReTcTDzIOztlA0POCE1xOjdocB66eT7AjwSX0war97iCSSJvN-2Fa7ZpsIHsbsxmfGxsNh2R3bohM7vfAH98-2FvcwaQ-3D-3D)  The large number of responses highlights the strength of opinion about night flights and perhaps the issue's controversy explains the long delay by the Government in announcing it will maintain the current regime.  A review was originally due in 2012, but postponed pending publication of the Government's Aviation Policy Framework. New aircraft have historically become progressively quieter over time, and the night flights regime has historically therefore become gradually more stringent in order to take up some of the slack. The 2012 ministerial statement indicated that "the government will take into account the freeze in quota limits during this extension period when setting the next regime and expects airlines to continue to improve their environmental performance in the interim."  **The Government's reasoning**  The main reasoning given by the Government for maintaining the current regime until 2017 is to provide 'stability' and 'certainty' until a decision on future airport capacity has been made on the back of the Airports Commission's final recommendations .This was the line taken in the Government's response to the Airports Commission issued on the same day as the new night noise regime.  As we argued in our night flights consultation response, maintaining the current regime was only necessary until the Airports Commission provided their short and medium term recommendations, one of which was a trial of early morning flights at Heathrow. Now that these recommendations have been published, we cannot see how a night flights regime for the next 4-6 years would affect the decision on long-term airport capacity in 2015.  **Importance of health impacts**  The new regime document does make an important admission on the health impacts of aircraft noise at night, namely that: "he [the Secretary of State] accepts that there are adverse effects on sleep and that there is increasing, though not conclusive, evidence of health effects from aircraft noise." This statement moves closer to the position taken by academics on the health impacts of aircraft noise but avoids any commitment to adapt policy to take account of this.  The statement indicates that the Government is continuing to review the health effects from aviation noise and that the CAA had, at the Government's request, recently updated their review of evidence on health impacts.  The current regime measures night noise using the 55 dB(A) contour to monitor the Government's night noise objective - to limit and where possible reduce the number of people significantly affected by noise at night. The Government claims that this reflects WHO Europe's 2009 night noise guidelines: "above 55dB Lnight, the situation is considered increasingly dangerous for public health."  Our consultation response strongly argued for Government night noise policy to follow WHO guidelines and so we welcome the Government's reference to this work. However, the WHO guidelines also state that health impacts occur at much lower levels of night noise and the level which is deemed safe is significantly lower than 55dB at night.  The consultation for the new regime specifically asked respondents what they thought about the latest evidence of health impacts from aircraft noise. Local authorities tended to say that Government policy should take a precautionary approach to the health impacts of aircraft noise and many recommended banning night flights as a precautionary measure. We would support the approach of acting based on the best and most recent evidence available of the health impacts of aircraft noise and consider the work of WHO and WHO Europe to be robust.  Finally, we argued that the environmental objectives for night noise should be more specific and challenging so as to be useful. We were disappointed that no changes were made to these objectives |