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Comments:

Dear Ms. LaFord,

As an avid hiker and backpacker, I frequently camp and hike in Olympic National Forests and Olympic National Park. Several years ago, I fell in love with the wild lands of the Olympic Peninsula and relocated my family here to be near its beautiful, pristine forests.

We highly value the quietness we experience in the forest. We love to listen to its natural soundscape, uninterrupted by man-made noise. The silence is deeply regenerative to our psyches: it offers a healing balm to our stressed nervous systems.

War-jet noise is an extremely offensive experience for me and my family: it assaults the psyche and the nerves. Permitting an Electronic Warfare Range will definitely put an end to our camping and backpacking excursions. The loss will be major for us. To imagine these forests---which I consider sacred--- being bombarded with jet noise from noisy Growlers practicing warfare overhead--- is a sacrilege.

In 2014, a woman asked the Navy representatives in a public meeting: What would the Navy do if the permit was NOT granted? Watch Navy officials shrug their shoulders and answer that they would continue, using with what they now have available to them. They might add simulators, but basically they would 'make do' with the resources they have now. See:

<https://vimeo.com/119469494>

This disclosure reveals that the Olympic Peninsula is NOT ESSENTIAL for training the Navy's pilots. They can continue to train where they are now --- in Mountain Home, Idaho -- a 20-minute commute for the pilots. And they can utilize other ranges. As you are well aware, the Department of Defense owns millions of acres of degraded land that is specifically set aside for such activities. These should be used instead.

It has not been documented that the Dept.of Defense has no other lands that can be utilized for this training. Such documentation is required by Federal Law, before our National Forests be permitted to be used for this purpose. My understanding is that it is your agency's legal responsibility to request, analyze, and make available to the public such documentation before you even consider granting such a special-use permit. I don't believe this required investigation has occurred. I suggest that it be done by a third party.

It is undeniable that the noise of the Growler war-jets, practicing almost daily, will have a major impact to visitors of Olympic National Forests and Olympic National Park. The local economies, which depend on tourism and recreational industries, will suffer. Of even greater concern: what will happen to the wildlife who make their home here? Many of these species, some threatened with extinction, depend upon their super-sensitive hearing to survive: they use it to locate prey, find mates, and communicate with their offspring. The noise of these war-jets will pose a serious threat to their survival.

NEPA requires all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of any project to be thoroughly assessed. I understand that the Forest Service skirts around this issue of jet noise by limiting their "assessment" of impacts to the mobile emitters. It would be obvious to any second-grader that the mobile emitters are directly connected to the Growlers flying overhead, as they will be interacting with them! That your agency chooses to ignore this glaring fact is utterly ridiculous, and actually unlawful, and it makes a sham of the the NEPA process.

That the USFS continues to sidestep this major issue of jet noise --- despite thousands of objections from the citizens who are paying your salaries to protect these lands --- is a disgrace. Public trust in your agency has suffered a serious blow because of it.

I therefore urge you to REVERSE your draft decision and DENY the Navy's request to use these cherished

public lands for military training.

Sacrificing the Olympic Peninsula to the military would be nothing less than a national tragedy.

Deborah Harrison