

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 536

To reestablish the Office of Noise Abatement and Control in the
Environmental Protection Agency.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 4, 1997

Mrs. LOWEY (for herself, Mr. SHAYS, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. SKAGGS, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. FROST, Mr. YATES, Mr. SABO, Ms. RIVERS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, Mr. RUSH, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. VENTO, Mr. MANTON, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. BONIOR, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. SERRANO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To reestablish the Office of Noise Abatement and Control
in the Environmental Protection Agency.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Quiet Communities
5 Act of 1997”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress finds that:

3 (1) For too many Americans, noise from air-
4 craft, vehicular traffic, and a variety of other
5 sources is a constant source of torment. In fact,
6 nearly 20,000,000 Americans are exposed to noise
7 levels that can lead to psychological and physio-
8 logical damage, and another 40,000,000 people are
9 exposed to noise levels that cause sleep or work dis-
10 ruption.

11 (2) Chronic exposure to noise has been linked
12 to increased risk of cardiovascular problems, strokes,
13 and nervous disorders. Excessive noise also causes
14 sleep deprivation and task interruptions, both of
15 which pose untold costs on society in diminished
16 worker productivity.

17 (3) Pursuant to authorities granted under the
18 Clean Air Act of 1970, the Noise Control Act of
19 1972, and the Quiet Communities Act of 1978, the
20 Environmental Protection Agency established an Of-
21 fice of Noise Abatement and Control. Its responsibil-
22 ities included promulgating noise emission stand-
23 ards, requiring product labeling, facilitating the de-
24 velopment of low emission products, coordinating
25 Federal noise reduction programs, assisting State
26 and local abatement efforts, and promoting noise

1 education and research. However, funding for the
2 Office of Noise Abatement and Control was termi-
3 nated in 1982 and no funds have been provided
4 since.

5 (4) Because the Environmental Protection
6 Agency remains legally responsible for enforcing reg-
7 ulations issued under the Noise Control Act of 1972
8 even though funding for these activities were termi-
9 nated, and because the Noise Control Act of 1972
10 prohibits State and local governments from regulat-
11 ing noise sources in many situations, noise abate-
12 ment programs across the country lie dormant.

13 (5) As population growth and air and vehicular
14 traffic continue to increase, noise pollution is likely
15 to become an even greater problem in the future.
16 The health and welfare of our citizens demands that
17 the Environmental Protection Agency, the lead Fed-
18 eral agency for the protection of public health and
19 welfare, once again assume a role in combating noise
20 pollution.

21 **SEC. 3. REESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF NOISE ABATE-**
22 **MENT AND CONTROL.**

23 (a) REESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of the
24 Environmental Protection Agency shall reestablish within
25 the Environmental Protection Agency an Office of Noise

1 Abatement and Control. This office shall be responsible
2 for coordinating Federal noise abatement activities, updat-
3 ing or developing new noise standards, providing technical
4 assistance to local communities, and promoting research
5 and education on the impacts of noise pollution. In meet-
6 ing these responsibilities, the Environmental Protection
7 Agency shall emphasize abatement approaches that rely
8 on local and State activity, market incentives, and coordi-
9 nation with other public and private agencies.

10 (b) STUDY.—Within the funds made available for the
11 Office of Noise Abatement and Control, the Administrator
12 shall conduct a study of airport noise. Such study, which
13 shall be completed no later than 18 months after the en-
14 actment of this Act, shall examine the Federal Aviation
15 Administration’s selection of noise measurement meth-
16 odologies, the threshold of noise at which health impacts
17 are felt, and the effectiveness of noise abatement programs
18 at airports around the nation. Such study shall include
19 specific recommendations to the Federal Aviation Admin-
20 istration on new measures that can be implemented to
21 mitigate the impact of aircraft noise on surrounding com-
22 munities.

1 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 There are authorized to be appropriated \$5,000,000
3 for each of fiscal years 1998, 1999, and 2000, and
4 \$8,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001 and 2002.

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