

Boca airport joins coalition to fight jet noise

By [TANIA VALDEMORO](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Saturday, June 11, 2005

BOCA RATON — For over a year, boxing promoter Don King's noisy Gulfstream jet has sat quietly in a hangar at the Boca Raton Airport.

It might be grounded there in the future if federal lawmakers pass a new plan to reduce airport noise within the next 18 months.

The Boca Raton Airport Authority has become the plan's newest supporter. On Friday, it informed local governments in Palm Beach and Broward counties that it has joined Sound Initiative, a Morristown, N.J.-based coalition that lobbies Congress to phase out the "noisiest" aircraft in the sky — older-model Stage 1 and Stage 2 planes weighing 75,000 pounds or less.

Sound Initiative recruited the airport to join its cause, Boca airport spokeswoman Kim Singer said. In turn, the airport will help build local support for the coalition.

Since its inception last year, Sound Initiative has signed up 20 regional airports, including the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Florida members include Key West International Airport, Martin County Airport, Naples Municipal Airport and St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport.

There are 16,526 aircraft in the U.S., and 11,444 of those are owned privately by businesses and individuals, estimates AvData Inc., an independent research firm. Based on aircraft registrations, Sound Initiative estimates there are about 1,100 Stage 1 and Stage 2 planes nationwide, said John Lindemann, who heads the coalition's campaign.

Though the planes compose a small percentage of the nation's fleet, they create enough noise to generate complaints and strain relations between airport officials and surrounding communities, he said.

"There's always going to be noise, but there will be a noticeable difference if these planes are taken out of commission," Singer said.

About 600 Boca-area houses, especially those in the Boca Teeca neighborhood, are in an area where people can hear at least 65 decibels of aircraft noise.

Planes taking off and landing on the Boca Raton Airport's single runway can generate up to 95 decibels of sound. Stage 1 planes, typically built in the 1960s, can be heard at 75 decibels as far as 38 miles away. But most complaints about noise — 15 of 30 calls last month alone — are attributed to Stage 2 planes, Singer said.

In 2002, the Boca Raton Airport Authority proposed to reduce noise by having planes fly northward over Interstate 95. The Federal Aviation Administration rejected the plan, saying the proposed flight path would pose a safety hazard because of increased air traffic congestion in the area.

As Sound Initiative mobilizes a robust membership to press Congress, it appears to have already won the support of locals.

The phase-out plan "will mitigate noise for people who live around the airport," said Janet Sherr, a Boca Raton Airport Authority member. "I think the benefit to the residents outweighs the corporate impact."

Shirley Schnuer, president of the Boca Teeca Homeowners Association, said Sound Initiative was "marvelous" and her group "fully supports" it.