

## Supporting Facts: Town Meeting Resolution to Cancel Basing of F-35 at the Airport

1. **Noise:** A [U.S. Air Force report](#)<sup>1</sup> says that the F-35 is more than four times louder than the F-16.
2. Burlington's own Board of Health spent several months hearing testimony and reviewing research data regarding health issues caused by fighter jet noise. The [Board then adopted a resolution](#).<sup>2</sup> "the Burlington Board of Health has concluded that noise has been associated with the following health effects: hearing loss, stress, sleep disturbance, heart attacks, hypertension and stroke, and delayed reading and verbal comprehension."
3. The same Air Force report says that Burlington Airport noise is now "dominated" by F-16 noise, (and later by F-35 noise), and that commercial jet noise is "negligible" in comparison.
4. The Air Force report says the area in which 2963 homes now stand in Burlington, Winooski, Williston, and Colchester will be "unsuitable for residential use" because of the extreme F-35 noise.
5. **The World Health Organization** (WHO) found that aircraft noise at the level of the F-35 in those 2963 homes causes half the children to suffer [delayed reading and degraded concentration, memory and attention](#).<sup>3</sup>
6. **The FAA says** "the best way to mitigate noise, at high noise levels, is [to buy homes and remove them](#)."<sup>4</sup>
7. **Burlington accepted FAA grants** of \$57 million to purchase and demolish 200 affordable South Burlington homes in the F-16 "unsuitable for residential use" noise danger zone, leaving 44 acres of vacant land near the airport entrance. A Burlington report says 973 more affordable homes remain in the F-16 noise danger zone.
8. The Air Force report and the Winooski grand list show that more than 3/4 of the housing units in Winooski are in the "unsuitable for residential use" noise danger zone of the F-35.
9. **Economic:** Affordable homes are in short supply in Chittenden County. Demolished homes and thousands of affordable homes in noise danger zones restrict business development and job growth in the county.
10. **Crash Rate:** The U.S. Air Force report provides data showing that crash rate will sharply increase when the F-35 comes to replace the F-16 in 2019.
11. **Crash Consequences:** Whereas the F-16 body is made of aluminum, the body of the F-35 includes 12,000 pounds of combustible military carbon composite materials with a combustible stealth coating. Upon a crash, when the F-35 body and stealth coating burn in the inferno of thousands of gallons of jet fuel during the time before firefighters arrive, a [Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division report](#)<sup>5</sup> states that highly toxic, mutagenic, and carcinogenic chemicals, particles, and fibers are released.
12. [A report issued by](#)<sup>6</sup> the Air Force Institute for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health, states that, unlike the F-16, the F-35 should be included in "the high-risk category due to the high percentage or high quantity of composite materials." Especially high-risk if the F-35 is based in a densely populated area.
13. In view of the catastrophic consequences of an F-35 crash, [an Air Force report](#)<sup>7</sup> suggests "anticipating and preventing" such an event. In plain English: Prevent basing the F-35 near thousands of families.
14. **Air Guard Mission:** Extreme noise danger, high crash rate, and high crash consequences each contradict the [Vermont Air National Guard Mission](#)<sup>8</sup> "to protect the citizens of Vermont."
15. **Air Force equipment is available** that makes no more noise than ordinary commercial jets and that has a safety record better than the F-16. Therefore, the Vermont Air National Guard can shift from the F-16 to equipment compatible with its location in a city neighborhood of thousands of affordable workforce homes.

16. **Burlington liability for damages:** in a [concurring opinion regarding F-35 basing](#),<sup>9</sup> specially assigned retired Vermont Supreme Court Judge James Morse wrote, “A fair number of courts ... have also concluded . . . that federal law does not preempt common-law actions against municipally-owned airports based on excessive noise.” That means Burlington is liable and can be sued by people injured by F-35 noise.
17. **City of Burlington is Responsible:** Under federal law, municipalities have full authority over municipally-owned airports. A Burlington decision to protect people in Burlington and neighboring towns would not be preempted by the federal government or by the Air Force. To protect health and safety—and Burlington taxpayers—Burlington, as airport owner, has authority to tell its airport tenants to operate equipment no louder than commercial jets and with a high safety record.
18. **The [Vermont Constitution \(Article 6\)](#)** requires that all government officials at all times and in a legal way be accountable to the people. But Burlington city officials, who have full control over airport decision-making, are not elected by or accountable to thousands of people whose lives they rule in the F-16 and F-35 noise and crash danger zones in South Burlington, Winooski, Williston, and Colchester.
19. **Burns vast quantity of oil for war while encouraging war for oil:** The F-35 is a stealth weapon of mass destruction designed for a first strike attack. Its massive consumption of jet fuel contributes to global warming. It cannot protect Vermont from climate change or mega storms. Nor can it protect Vermont from cyber attack, nuclear missiles, terrorism, food insecurity, or income inequality. Nor can it protect women, LGBTQ, African Americans, immigrants, refugees, or veterans. The F-35 program drains \$1.4 trillion from health care, education, affordable housing, and infrastructure. It does not take on the billionaire class. Or the fossil fuel industry. It does not drive money out of politics. It does not abolish pervasive racism. Or abolish tuition and student debt. It feeds the military-industrial complex. The F-35 encourages war. Its extreme noise and high crash risk endanger our children and adults. F-35 basing contradicts a government that works for all of us and that is accountable to the people.

### Notes and citations

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1. “United States Air Force F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement” (EIS), Sep. 2013.
2. Resolution adopted by the Burlington Board of Health, January 13, 2013.
3. “Burden of Disease from Environmental Noise,” World Health Organization, 2011.
4. Richard Doucette, the FAA’s New England Environmental Program manager, “FAA offers few solutions for F-35 noise mitigation in South Burlington,” VTDigger, Feb. 17, 2017.
4. “Composite Materials in Aircraft Mishaps Involving Fire: A Literature Review,” Mark T. Wright et al, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, China Lake, CA 93555-6100.
5. “Assessment of Composite Hazards at Crash Sites: Industrial Hygiene Field Guidance For Bioenvironmental Engineers,” Melissa Hinojosa, et al, Air Force Institute for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Risk Analysis Directorate, Health and Safety Division, Brooks Air Force Base TX.
6. “Mishap Risk Control for Advanced Aerospace/Composite Materials,” 1Lt. John M. Olson, US Air Force, USAF Advanced Composites Program Office, McClellan Air Force Base, CA.
7. The Vermont Air National Guard 158<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing Mission, document AFD-140812-031.
8. In re Request for Jurisdictional Opinion re: Changes in Physical Structure and Use at Burlington International Airport for F-35A, Vermont Supreme Court, 2015 VT 41.