

## **Letter in Support of Common Council Resolution 3/31/20**

from *Physicians for Social Responsibility Wisconsin*

We strongly support the Common Council's resolution "Responding to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Air National Guard F-35A Operational Beddown".

We indicated in our 11/4/2019 response to the **F-35 Draft Environmental Impact Statement FR #2018-02468** that we have deep concerns about the health and environmental impacts of the bed-down of F-35 fighter jets at Truax AFB in Madison, Wisconsin. We are also concerned about the public health threat that these nuclear capable jets pose.

(PFAS Contamination of Soil and Water)

Soil near Truax Air Force Base, wells 15, 23 and 9 in East Madison and the Starkwater Creek watershed are contaminated with high levels of PFAS compounds, yet there has been no attempt at remediation by the Air Force. PFAS has been linked to low infant birth weights, adverse immune outcomes in children, dyslipidemia (high cholesterol), thyroid hormone disruption and cancer.

(Sound Effects)

The noise created by the F-35s is an impulse sound — a brief, very loud noise which causes more severe hearing loss than steady state noise. The body has a reflex mechanism which protects the ear when exposed to loud, continuous noise. The reflex is slow, and thus does not provide protection to the ear against sudden impulsive sounds. Infants and many disabled and elderly people cannot remove themselves from sound, nor can they hold their hands up to shield their ears. The narrow ear canals of children make sound louder.

Hence, the average day-night noise exposure (DNL) measured over a 24-hour period in the draft EIS does not measure the true impact of F-35 noise on health. In adults, excessive noise is linked to increases in stress

hormones, increases in blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease. In children, it can cause delayed speech development, reduced attention and concentration and decreased math and reading comprehension. In pregnant woman, exposure to excessive noise increases the chance that their babies will have low birth weights, a risk factor for many newborn diseases and poor developmental outcomes.

There are 15 daycares and numerous schools in the neighborhoods near Truax, so thousands of children will be affected by the noise from F35's.

#### (Air Pollution and Greenhouse Gas Emissions)

The F35 fighter jets consume large quantities of fuel, because of their reliance on afterburner engines for takeoff. The more fuel that is used, the higher the levels of ultrafine particle and carbon monoxide, sulfuric and nitrous oxides, and organic compound emissions. These air pollutants are linked to higher rates of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and respiratory diseases such as asthma.

These takeoff emissions will occur at ground level, thus decreasing the chance of vertical mixing of the pollutants with cleaner air at higher atmospheric levels. The air quality at Truax and the surrounding neighborhoods will be adversely affected, especially during thermal inversions.

Jet fuel exhaust also leads to increased carbon dioxide emissions, the major green house gas responsible for the global warming and climate change.

#### (Stealth Coatings)

As a stealth aircraft designed to be invisible to radar detection systems, the F-35 receives frequent coats of a special composite material. We do not know what this material is composed of, how toxic its components might be, nor how the Air Force plans to keep the components from polluting the surrounding soil and water.

#### (Risk of Crash or Fire)

Each F-35 carries 18,000 pounds of fuel. If a pilot is required to dump fuel in an emergency scenario, the military instructs the person to unload it “over large bodies of water as much as possible,” raising the specter of a massive discharge over a Wisconsin lake.

The F-35’s entire exterior is composed of lightweight composite materials, like Kevlar and graphite. The smoke produced from a burning F-35 would contain microscopic fibers and plastics known by the Air Force to be highly toxic. According to a number of military studies, such materials could inflict permanent lung and neural damage, and even death, if inhaled. Exposure could also lead to cancer and birth defects.

(Nuclear Capability)

The City of Madison Mayor’s staff have been informed that “if Truax is selected, the F35s arriving would not be nuclear capable and only units with a nuclear mission would be given the hardware necessary to carry nuclear weapons.” But the mission of the F-35s can change and the military is not required to inform the public.

Because of the F-35’s stealth technology and the accuracy of its B61-12 bomb, the F-35 is being considered a first strike nuclear weapon.

Does the City of Madison want to host a weapon system which, if used, could precipitate a nuclear war, leading to the deaths of billions of people?