Return to State of the Union Report

Noise Pollution

Information Retrieved from AI- To be Verified

Section 1 Top 35 Countries with Lowest Noise Pollution

Rank	Country	Average Noise Level (dB) 2024 Gallup Survey
1	Suomi (Finland)	35
2	Norge (Norway)	36
3	New Zealand	36
4	Iceland	37
5	Estonia	37
6	Sverige (Sweden)	38
7	Danmark (Denmark)	38
8	Slovenia	39
9	Éire (Ireland)	39
10	Portugal	40
11	Croatia	40
12	Lietuva (Lithuania)	41
13	Latvija (Latvia)	41
14	Slovensko (Slovakia)	42
15	Uruguay	42
16	Costa Rica	42
17	България Balgariya (Bulgaria)	43
18	Österreich (Austria)	43
19	Suisse or Schweiz (Switzerland)	43
20	Česko (Czech Republic)	44
21	Ελλάδα Elláda (Greece)	44
22	Magyarország (Hungary)	44
23	Србија Srbija (Serbia)	45
24	Chile	45
25	România (Romania)	45
26	Malaysia	46
27	한국 Hanguk (South Korea)	46
28	日本 Nippon (Japan)	46
29	Canada	47

30	España (Spain)	47
31	Argentina	47
32	Polska (Poland)	48
33	Nederland (Netherlands)	48
34	Australia	48
35	Belgique (Belgium)	49
—	United States	~52

Source: Gallup International Environmental Perception Survey 2024.

The United States does not appear among the top 35 countries with the lowest noise pollution levels. The United States has an estimated national average environmental noise exposure of approximately 52 decibels. Large metropolitan transportation systems, high automobile dependency, freight rail corridors, airports, construction activity, and high population density contribute to higher environmental sound exposure.

The United States lacks a single comprehensive federal noise standard for urban environments, relying instead on a patchwork of state and municipal regulations that vary widely in their stringency and enforcement.

United States Average Noise Pollution by Year

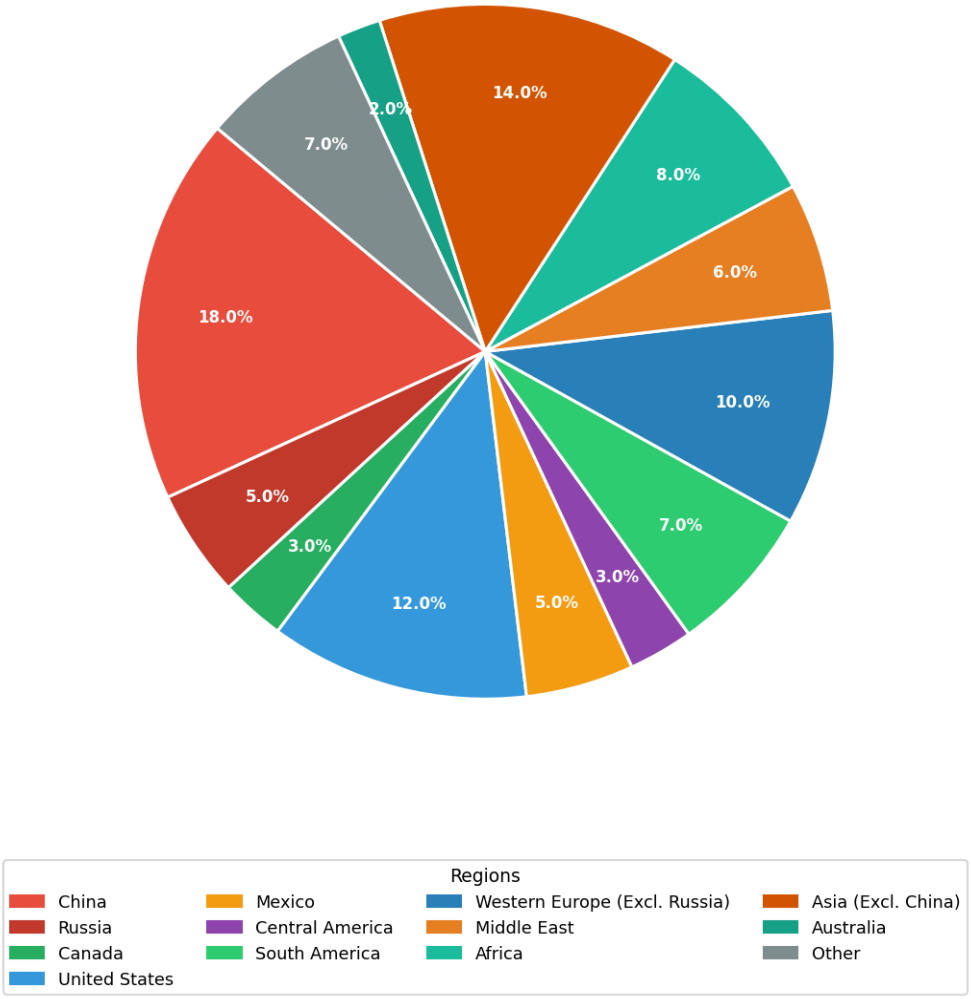
Year	Average Noise Level (dB)
2016	54
2017	54
2018	53
2019	53
2020	52
2021	51
2022	52
2023	52
2024	52
2025	52

United States Monthly Noise Pollution Levels

Month	Average Noise Level (dB)
Jan 2025	52
Feb 2025	52
Mar 2025	51
Apr 2025	52
May 2025	53
Jun 2025	54
Jul 2025	55
Aug 2025	55
Sep 2025	53
Oct 2025	52
Nov 2025	51
Dec 2025	50
Jan 2026	51
Feb 2026	51

References: Gallup Organization https://www.gallup.com , World Health Organization https://www.who.int , European Environment Agency https://www.eea.europa.eu , United States Environmental Protection Agency https://www.epa.gov

Global Noise Pollution Distribution by Region (2024)
Estimated Contribution to Worldwide Noise Exposure



Section 2. What Other Countries Have Done to Lower Noise Pollution

Suomi (Finland)

Suomi has implemented one of the most comprehensive national noise management frameworks in Europe. Suomi has reduced urban noise pollution through a combination of national legislation, transport policy, and building standards.

The Suomi Environment Institute (SYKE) coordinates national noise action plans under the Act on Environmental Protection (527/2014), which requires municipalities to develop noise abatement plans every five years.

The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) monitors the health effects of noise and produces annual public reports that inform policy revision

Helsinki requires all major event organizers to submit noise impact assessments and obtain noise permits from city authorities. Websites: https://www.syke.fi | https://www.traficom.fi | https://thl.fi

Suomi introduced quiet road pavement technologies on highways near residential areas. The government funded the replacement of traditional asphalt with porous noise absorbing asphalt materials that can reduce traffic noise levels by approximately 3 to 5 decibels.

Helsinki's city government has implemented one of Europe's most comprehensive urban quiet zone networks, designating over 60 city parks and green corridors as noise-free areas enforced by noise monitoring sensors connected to the city's environmental management system.

Municipal governments such as the City of Helsinki established long term urban acoustic planning programs requiring new housing developments to include sound insulation walls, acoustic glass windows, and green buffer zones.

The Ministry of the Environment mandates that new residential buildings include triple-pane acoustic windows and insulated walls rated to block a minimum of 32 dB of exterior noise.

The Ministry of the Environment https://ym.fi coordinates national environmental noise reduction policies while the Suomi Transport Infrastructure Agency https://vayla.fi oversees transportation noise control.

The country also implemented a nationwide rail modernization program where the Suomi Transport Infrastructure Agency required freight rail operators to install low noise brake blocks and quieter wheel assemblies.

Suomi has invested heavily in tramway and metro infrastructure to reduce diesel vehicle traffic in urban centers. The Suomi Transport and Communications Agency (Traficom) enforces vehicle noise emission standards that are stricter than the EU baseline.

These regulations significantly reduced rail noise across the national freight system.

Suomi has also used geographic planning to separate industrial zones from residential neighborhoods. Noise monitoring sensors are deployed throughout major cities and environmental data is publicly available through national environmental data portals.

Norge (Norway)

Norge has reduced urban noise through an integrated approach combining infrastructure investment, regulation, and urban design and reduced environmental noise through strong integration between transportation planning and environmental policy.

The Norge Environment Agency(Miljodirektoratet) https://www.miljodirektoratet.no works with the Norwegian Public Roads Administration https://www.vegvesen.no to implement strict noise standards for road construction and urban planning. It enforces the Pollution Control Act and the Technical Regulations for Construction (TEK17), which mandate minimum sound insulation requirements for all new residential and commercial construction.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications has invested over NOK 12 billion in electric rail, tram, and bus rapid transit systems in Oslo, Bergen, and Trondheim, reducing reliance on combustion-engine vehicles.

The Institute of Transport Economics (TØI) conducts ongoing research that informs national noise abatement policy.

A major component of Norge's strategy involved electrification of public transportation. Electric buses and electric ferries have replaced diesel fleets in several urban areas, dramatically lowering both air pollution and mechanical noise levels.

Norge also constructed extensive highway tunnels in urban regions. Instead of routing highways through city centers, transportation infrastructure was moved underground in cities such as Oslo and Bergen. This significantly reduced the environmental noise exposure for residential neighborhoods.

The Norge Public Roads Administration (Statens vegvesen) installs noise barriers along highways that pass through or near residential areas as a standard requirement in road construction projects.

Oslo has banned private diesel vehicles from the city center on days when pollution levels exceed regulatory thresholds.

Local municipalities are required by law to produce noise action plans and update them every five years in accordance with EU Environmental Noise Directive requirements as adopted into Norge law through the EEA Agreement.

The government provides subsidies for residential sound insulation programs allowing homeowners near major transport corridors to receive financial assistance for noise mitigation improvements.

Private developments near airports or motorways must include compensatory sound insulation funded by the developer. Websites: https://www.miljodirektoratet.no | https://www.vegvesen.no | https://www.toi.no

New Zealand

New Zealand has achieved low urban noise levels through a combination of resource management law, local government regulations, and urban design practices.

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA NZ) oversees industrial noise and requires environmental impact assessments for all large industrial facilities.

New Zealand's National Environmental Standards for Air Quality include provisions that also affect noise-generating activities from transport and industry.

New Zealand also has an active acoustic engineering sector supported by the Acoustical Society of New Zealand, which works with local governments to test and implement noise reduction technologies. Websites: https://environment.govt.nz | https://www.epa.govt.nz | https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) gives local councils authority to set noise standards and enforce them, and the NZS 6802:2008 Acoustics standard establishes acceptable noise levels for residential and commercial environments.

New Zealand manages environmental noise under the Resource Management Act administered by the Ministry for the Environment https://environment.govt.nz and local municipal planning authorities. The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) publishes the New Zealand Noise Standard (NZS 6800) guidelines for local governments.

Cities such as Auckland and Wellington adopted detailed acoustic zoning rules that limit the allowable decibel levels for commercial and industrial activities depending on the time of day and mandatory acoustic assessments for properties near state highways, railway lines, and airports.

Nighttime noise restrictions are strongly enforced with local government monitoring systems.

New Zealand also introduced aviation noise management plans near major airports including Auckland International Airport. Flight path optimization and restrictions on nighttime aircraft departures helped significantly reduce residential exposure to aircraft noise.

Urban planners incorporate green infrastructure such as forested corridors and park systems that act as natural sound barriers between transportation corridors and residential communities.

Sverige (Sweden)

Sverige has been a global leader in environmental noise research and management.

The Sverige work environment authority (Arbetsmiljoverket) enforces occupational noise limits of 80 dB for an eight-hour workday, among the strictest in the world.

Swedish urban design guidelines require that new residential buildings include architectural noise protection measures including interior courtyard structures that shield residents from traffic noise.

All new residential construction in Sverige must meet SBN 2021 acoustic standards, which require that internal noise from external sources not exceed 30 dB in bedrooms.

The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) publishes noise design guidelines used by all Swedish architects and urban planners. Sverige funds grants for the noise insulation of older residential buildings located within 100 meters of motorways or railway lines. Websites: https://www.naturvardsverket.se | https://www.trafikverket.se | https://www.boverket.se

The Sverige Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvardsverket) sets national noise guidelines under the Swedish Environmental Code (SFS 1998:808), which limit road traffic noise outside dwellings to 55 dB daytime and 45 dB nighttime.

Sverige's approach to urban noise reduction has been comprehensive, combining some of Europe's strictest building codes with proactive urban planning and a long-term commitment to electrifying public transportation.

The Sverige Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvardsverket) sets national noise guidelines under the Swedish Environmental Code (SFS 1998:808), which limit road traffic noise outside dwellings to 55 dB daytime and 45 dB nighttime.

The Sverige Environmental Protection Agency https://www.naturvardsverket.se coordinates national noise reduction policy while the Swedish Transport Administration https://www.trafikverket.se implements transportation infrastructure programs.

Sverige introduced strict vehicle noise emission standards requiring automobile manufacturers to meet lower decibel limits. Urban bus fleets were transitioned to electric propulsion systems reducing noise levels in dense metropolitan areas.

Stockholm has implemented a congestion pricing system that has reduced traffic volumes in the central city by approximately 22%, with corresponding measurable decreases in urban noise levels.

Sound absorbing rail systems and specialized rail grinding techniques also reduce train noise levels.

The Sverige Transport Administration (Trafikverket) is required by law to install noise-reducing barriers whenever infrastructure upgrades occur on roads, railways, or transit lines adjacent to populated areas.

Danmark (Denmark)

Danmark's urban noise management combines strong regulatory frameworks with a nationally coordinated approach to sustainable transport and urban design.

The Danmark Environmental Protection Agency (Miljostyrelsen) enforces noise limits under the Environmental Protection Act (LBK No. 1218/2019), setting road traffic noise standards of 58 dB for existing residences and 53 dB for new residential developments.

Danmark has invested heavily in expanding cycling infrastructure in its cities; Copenhagen has more than 390 kilometers of protected cycling lanes, and over 62% of residents commute daily by bicycle, dramatically reducing motor vehicle noise in the urban environment.

The Danmark Road Directorate (Vejdirektoratet) mandates noise mapping every five years for all roads with more than three million annual vehicle passages and requires action plans for roads exceeding noise thresholds.

Danmark's Building Regulations 2018 (BR18) require that new residential buildings achieve external wall noise insulation ratings of at least Rw 35 dB.

The Centre for Acoustics at the Technical University of Danmark (DTU) collaborates with government agencies to develop and test noise-reducing road surface technologies.

Danmark provides financial assistance to homeowners within specified noise zones along motorways for window and insulation upgrades. Websites: https://www.mst.dk | https://www.vejdirektoratet.dk | https://www.dtu.dk

Danmark implemented national road traffic noise reduction policies through the Danmark Environmental Protection Agency https://mst.dk and the Danish Road Directorate .https://www.vejdirektoratet.dk

Copenhagen's municipal government has banned trucks over 3.5 tons from residential streets during nighttime hours (10:00 PM to 6:00 AM).

The government implemented national traffic speed reduction zones within residential communities. Lower vehicle speeds significantly reduce tire and engine noise.

Danmark also implemented national subsidies allowing homeowners near highways to install acoustic insulated windows and structural sound barriers.

Municipal governments constructed thousands of meters of highway sound barrier walls to shield residential areas from traffic noise.

Danmark also requires acoustic evaluation in all major infrastructure planning projects.

Iceland

Iceland manages environmental noise primarily through airport noise management and urban acoustic planning programs.

The Environment Agency of Iceland https://ust.is works with the Icelandic Transport Authority https://www.icetra.is to regulate aviation noise exposure.

Major airports such as Keflavik International Airport redesigned flight paths to avoid densely populated residential areas whenever possible. Nighttime flight operations were restricted to reduce sleep disturbance among nearby residents.

Iceland also implemented strong building insulation standards that require thick wall insulation materials and triple pane windows to reduce interior noise exposure.

Estonia

Estonia implemented a National Environmental Noise Reduction Plan led by the Ministry of Climate https://kliimaministeerium.ee and the Estonian Transport Administration https://transpordiamet.ee.

The country installed nationwide environmental noise monitoring networks that collect real time sound data in major cities. This information allows government agencies to identify noise hotspots and prioritize mitigation efforts.

Urban green belt programs were developed around highways and major transportation corridors. Trees and vegetation act as natural acoustic barriers while also improving urban air quality.

Slovenia

Slovenia developed an integrated national acoustic planning framework managed by the Slovenian Environment Agency https://www.arso.gov.si and the Ministry of Infrastructure https://www.gov.si.

The government funded installation of highway sound barriers along major transport corridors and introduced low noise rail braking technologies.

Municipal governments enforce nighttime restrictions on entertainment districts and commercial activities that exceed legal noise limits.

Public awareness campaigns encourage citizens and businesses to adopt quieter equipment technologies.

Other Countries with Low Noise Pollution

Schweiz (Switzerland)

Schweiz operates under one of the most rigorous national noise regulatory systems in the world, managed through federal law and implemented through canton and municipal authorities.

The Federal Noise Abatement Ordinance (LSV/OPB, SR 814.41) sets legally binding exposure limits for all noise sources including road traffic, rail, aviation, industry, and construction.

The Federal Office for the Environment (BAFU/OFEV) oversees implementation and requires all cantons to submit annual noise monitoring data and abatement progress reports.

Schweiz requires that new construction near major roads or rail lines include structural sound insulation measures funded by the noise-generating infrastructure operator, not the property owner or developer.

Schweiz Federal Railways (SBB/CFF) has completed the replacement of all older freight wagons with low-noise braking systems, reducing rail noise across the country by an estimated 10 dB.

The Federal Office for Civil Aviation (BAZL) administers strict aircraft noise quotas at Swiss airports, restricting nighttime flights and requiring airlines to meet Chapter 14 noise certification standards. Swiss cantons conduct mandatory noise cadastral surveys and publish results publicly.

Municipalities are legally required to publish noise action plans and make them accessible to all citizens. Fines for construction noise violations can reach CHF 100,000 per incident. Websites:

Österreich (Austria)

Österreich has developed a sophisticated multi-layered noise management system that integrates federal environmental law, regional spatial planning, and municipal ordinances.

The Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) oversees noise policy under the Environmental Noise Act (Umgebungslarmprasetz, BGBl. I Nr. 60/2005), which implements the EU Environmental Noise Directive.

ASFINAG, the Österreich motorway and expressway operator, is required to install noise barriers or provide noise mitigation compensation to any property owner within 50 meters of a motorway that exceeds 65 dB during daytime hours.

Vienna, Österreich's capital, requires that all public transport tenders mandate noise emission levels below EU standards and funds the retrofitting of older trams and underground rail cars with quieter wheel and brake technology.

The Österreich Institute for Technology (AIT) collaborates with the City of Vienna on acoustic city modeling and real-time noise monitoring, with over 150 noise monitoring stations installed throughout the metropolitan area.

Österreich enforces a nationwide nighttime noise curfew for commercial deliveries, prohibiting trucks over 7.5 tons from operating between 10:00 PM and 5:00 AM except for essential services.

Building codes under OIB Guideline 5 (Schallschutz) mandate minimum acoustic performance standards for all new construction.

The Österreich Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt) publishes biennial noise exposure reports. Websites: https://www.bmk.gv.at | https://www.asfinag.at | https://www.umweltbundesamt.at

Section 3: What the U.S. Can Do to Decrease Its Urban Noise Pollution

General Overview

The United States currently lacks a unified federal framework for managing urban noise pollution. The Noise Control Act of 1972 gave the Environmental Protection Agency authority over noise regulation, but funding for the EPA's Office of Noise Abatement and Control was eliminated in 1982, and the agency has not exercised this authority systematically since.

To meaningfully reduce urban noise pollution, the United States would need to reinstate and expand federal noise regulation, fund state and local implementation, and engage transportation, construction, aviation, and industry sectors in coordinated action.

Transportation noise is the largest contributor to environmental noise exposure; therefore transportation reform would be a central element of policy. Federal programs could support quiet pavement technology, electrified public transportation systems, sound barrier infrastructure, and strict aircraft noise regulation.

Urban planning reforms could establish buffer zones between residential neighborhoods and high intensity transportation corridors or industrial facilities. Building codes could require improved acoustic insulation standards. Real time noise monitoring networks could be deployed across major metropolitan areas allowing governments to track environmental sound exposure and enforce legal limits.

A national strategy to reduce environmental noise pollution in the United States would require coordinated action between federal agencies, state governments, municipalities, private industry, and individual citizens.

Government Agencies

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should re-establish and fully fund its Office of Noise Abatement and Control with a budget of no less than $500 million annually. The EPA must be charged with setting national ambient noise standards for urban environments, developing noise measurement protocols, and coordinating enforcement with state environmental agencies.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) must require noise impact assessments for all federally funded transportation projects and mandate noise barrier installation wherever highway noise exceeds 67 dB in residential areas.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) must revise aircraft noise certification standards to require compliance with Stage 5 or equivalent standards within five years and must restrict nighttime departure and arrival windows at airports near residential communities.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) should update its Highway Traffic Noise Policy to require noise mitigation for all projects affecting communities with populations greater than 10,000.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) should require that all federally subsidized housing units be built to acoustic performance standards ensuring interior noise levels do not exceed 35 dB from exterior sources.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) should lower the permissible noise exposure limit in workplaces from 90 dB to 80 dB over an eight-hour average.

Government Officials

Members of Congress must reauthorize and fund the Noise Control Act and allocate dedicated appropriations to noise abatement programs across federal agencies.

State governors should direct their state environmental agencies to adopt noise standards at least as protective as those proposed under new federal guidelines and establish state noise abatement offices with enforcement authority.

Municipal mayors and city councils must adopt local noise ordinances setting maximum permissible levels for construction, commercial, transportation, and recreational sources, and must fund their enforcement through dedicated noise control inspectors.

State legislatures should establish grant programs to help lower-income homeowners in high-noise zones fund acoustic insulation improvements.

Corporations

Manufacturing corporations must comply with federally set noise emission standards for all equipment sold in the United States, with mandatory labeling of noise output ratings.

Construction companies must develop and submit noise management plans for all projects in urban areas and use best available technology to minimize construction noise, including acoustic barriers around active work sites, restrictions on nighttime operations, and the use of electrically powered rather than diesel-powered equipment wherever feasible.

Airlines must replace older, noisier aircraft with models meeting current Stage 4 and Stage 5 certification within a defined timeline and must voluntarily adopt continuous descent approach procedures to reduce low-altitude noise over residential neighborhoods.

Automotive manufacturers must accelerate the transition to electric vehicle models, which produce significantly less engine and exhaust noise than internal combustion alternatives.

Property developers must commission acoustic assessments prior to submitting planning applications in areas affected by transportation or industrial noise and must integrate acoustic engineering solutions into project designs from inception.

Private Individuals

Private citizens play an important role in urban noise reduction. Individuals should be encouraged to choose electric or hybrid vehicles and to reduce unnecessary idling.

Homeowners in high-noise areas should be eligible for federal and state tax credits for noise insulation improvements including window replacement, wall insulation, and installation of acoustic landscaping barriers.

Citizens should be empowered to report noise ordinance violations through municipal hotlines or digital reporting applications.

Community organizations should be supported in advocating for quiet zones in neighborhoods near hospitals, schools, and residential areas.

Private property owners who operate commercial or recreational venues that generate significant noise must comply with municipal sound limits and invest in sound management technology including acoustic enclosures, mufflers, and directional speaker systems.

Section 4: References

World Health Organization - Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789289053617

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Noise Pollution: https://www.epa.gov/clean-air-act-overview/title-iv-noise-pollution

European Environment Agency - Noise in Europe: https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/human/noise

Federal Aviation Administration - Aircraft Noise: https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/apl/noise_emissions

Federal Highway Administration - Highway Traffic Noise: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise

Gallup World Poll: https://www.gallup.com/analytics/318875/gallup-world-poll.aspx

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency - Naturvardsverket: https://www.naturvardsverket.se

Norwegian Environment Agency - Miljodirektoratet: https://www.miljodirektoratet.no

Finnish Environment Institute - SYKE: https://www.syke.fi

Swiss Federal Office for the Environment - BAFU: https://www.bafu.admin.ch

Danish Environmental Protection Agency - Miljostyrelsen: https://www.mst.dk

Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action - BMK: https://www.bmk.gv.at

New Zealand Ministry for the Environment: https://environment.govt.nz

Icelandic Environment Agency - Umhverfisstofnun: https://www.ust.is

U.S. Department of Transportation - Noise Policy: https://www.transportation.gov/mission/sustainability/noise

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health - Noise: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise

OECD International Transport Forum https://www.itf-oecd.org

Section 5 Draft of a House Bill

H.R. ___

118th CONGRESS

2d Session

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A BILL

To reduce urban noise pollution in the United States, to restore and expand the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency with respect to noise abatement and control, to establish enforceable national standards for urban noise exposure, to require action by federal agencies, state and local governments, corporations, and private individuals, and for other purposes.

SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the "Urban Noise Pollution Reduction and Abatement Act of 2024".

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

1. AMBIENT NOISE. The term "ambient noise" means the all-encompassing noise associated with a given environment, usually being a composite of sounds from many sources near and far.

2. DECIBEL (dB). The term "decibel" means a unit used to measure the intensity of a sound, equal to the logarithm of the ratio of the intensity of the sound to the intensity of an arbitrarily chosen standard sound.

3. URBAN NOISE POLLUTION. The term "urban noise pollution" means unwanted or harmful sound generated by transportation, construction, industry, commercial activity, or other human activities within areas designated as urban or metropolitan in nature that adversely affects public health, welfare, or quality of life.

4. NOISE ABATEMENT PLAN. The term "noise abatement plan" means a written document adopted by a federal agency, state, or local government that identifies sources of noise pollution, establishes reduction targets, and outlines specific actions, timelines, and funding mechanisms to achieve those targets.

5. QUIET ZONE. The term "quiet zone" means a designated geographic area within which noise-generating activities are restricted or prohibited during specified times so as to protect sensitive receptors including schools, hospitals, residential neighborhoods, and parks.

6. SENSITIVE RECEPTOR. The term "sensitive receptor" means any land use or activity that may be adversely affected by noise, including but not limited to residences, schools, hospitals, child care facilities, places of worship, and public parks.

7. NOISE EMISSION STANDARD. The term "noise emission standard" means a quantitative limit on the amount of noise that may be emitted by a product, vehicle, aircraft, or facility during specified operational conditions.

8. NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT. The term "noise impact assessment" means a systematic evaluation of the noise levels generated by a proposed project, activity, or land use and the potential effects of those levels on sensitive receptors.

9. AMBIENT NOISE STANDARD. The term "ambient noise standard" means a numerical limit, measured in decibels, on the acceptable level of noise in a defined area during specified time periods.

10. ADMINISTRATOR. The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

11. ACOUSTIC INSULATION. The term "acoustic insulation" means materials, methods, or structural features incorporated into a building to reduce the transmission of sound between the exterior environment and the interior of a structure.

12. NIGHTTIME HOURS. The term "nighttime hours" means the period between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM local time, unless otherwise specified by applicable state or local ordinance.

13. BEST AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY. The term "best available technology" means the most effective and commercially available means of reducing noise emissions from a product, vehicle, facility, or process.

SECTION 2. ENACTING CLAUSE

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that this Act shall be known as the Urban Noise Pollution Reduction and Abatement Act of 2024. The Congress finds that:

(a) Urban noise pollution constitutes a significant public health hazard in the United States, contributing to cardiovascular disease, sleep disruption, cognitive impairment, and diminished quality of life for tens of millions of Americans.

(b) The World Health Organization has identified environmental noise as the second largest environmental health risk in Western Europe and has called upon all nations to adopt binding standards to protect citizens from excessive noise exposure.

(c) The United States Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Noise Abatement and Control, established under the Noise Control Act of 1972, has been effectively defunded since 1982, leaving a significant gap in federal noise regulation and enforcement.

(d) Many peer nations including Suomi, Norge, Sverige, Danmark, Schweiz, Österreich, and New Zealand have demonstrated through enforceable national noise standards, coordinated transport and land use policy, and sustained investment in noise mitigation technology that significant reductions in urban noise pollution are achievable.

(e) The economic costs of urban noise pollution in the United States, including healthcare expenditures, reduced property values, decreased worker productivity, and diminished tourism, are estimated to exceed $100 billion annually.

(f) Federal action is necessary to establish minimum national standards, coordinate interagency efforts, and provide resources to states and localities for effective noise abatement.

SECTION 3. REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

(a) ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.

(1) The Administrator shall, within one year of the date of enactment of this Act, re-establish and fully fund the Office of Noise Abatement and Control within the Environmental Protection Agency, with an initial annual appropriation of not less than $500,000,000.

(2) The Administrator shall, within two years of enactment, promulgate national ambient noise standards for urban environments establishing maximum permissible outdoor noise levels of 55 dB during daytime hours and 45 dB during nighttime hours for residential zones, consistent with World Health Organization guidelines.

(3) The Administrator shall establish a national noise monitoring network consisting of not fewer than 2,000 monitoring stations in urban areas with a population exceeding 100,000, providing real-time public access to noise data through a federal online portal.

(4) The Administrator shall coordinate with state environmental agencies to develop state implementation plans for noise abatement that include enforceable local ordinances, inspection regimes, and penalty structures.

(5) The Administrator shall publish biennial reports on the status of urban noise pollution in the United States, including health impact data, enforcement actions, and progress toward national noise reduction targets.

(b) DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

(1) The Secretary of Transportation shall require that all federally funded transportation projects include a mandatory noise impact assessment completed by a certified acoustical engineer prior to project approval.

(2) The Federal Highway Administration shall update the Federal Highway Traffic Noise Policy within one year of enactment to require noise barrier installation for all highway segments within 300 feet of residential areas where noise levels exceed 67 dB daytime.

(3) The Federal Aviation Administration shall revise aircraft noise certification requirements to mandate Stage 5 compliance for all aircraft operating in the United States by 2030 and shall restrict scheduled commercial flight operations at airports adjacent to residential areas between the hours of 11:00 PM and 6:00 AM.

(4) The Federal Transit Administration shall give priority in grant funding to transit projects that demonstrably reduce urban noise pollution, including electric bus rapid transit, light rail, and underground metro systems.

(5) The Secretary of Transportation shall develop a National Quiet Freight Initiative requiring the use of quieter braking systems, low-noise tires, and electric or hybrid powertrains in freight vehicles operating within urban areas.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

(1) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall require that all new residential construction funded in whole or in part by federal grants, loans, or tax credits meet acoustic performance standards ensuring that interior noise levels from exterior sources do not exceed 35 dB in sleeping rooms and 40 dB in living areas.

(2) The Secretary shall establish a Residential Noise Insulation Grant Program providing up to $15,000 per household for noise insulation improvements to existing homes located in federally designated high-noise zones.

(3) The Secretary shall prohibit the siting of new federally funded housing developments within noise-sensitive distances of airports, freight rail yards, or highway interchanges unless the developer provides certified acoustic mitigation measures.

(d) OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(1) The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health shall, within 18 months of enactment, issue a final rule lowering the permissible noise exposure limit for workers from 90 dB to 80 dB over an eight-hour time-weighted average.

(2) OSHA shall require employers in construction, manufacturing, transportation, and entertainment industries to provide hearing conservation programs, including audiometric testing and provision of hearing protection equipment, for all workers exposed to noise levels at or above 75 dB.

SECTION 4. REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

(a) MEMBERS OF CONGRESS shall introduce and vote upon annual appropriations sufficient to fund the re-established Office of Noise Abatement and Control and all programs authorized under this Act at levels not less than those specified herein.

(b) STATE GOVERNORS shall, within two years of enactment, direct their state environmental protection and transportation agencies to adopt noise standards at least as protective as those established under this Act and shall appoint state noise abatement coordinators responsible for overseeing implementation.

(c) MUNICIPAL MAYORS AND CITY COUNCILS shall adopt local noise ordinances within three years of enactment consistent with national ambient noise standards, designate enforcement personnel, and establish community-accessible noise complaint reporting systems.

(d) STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL shall develop and exercise authority to bring civil enforcement actions against persistent violators of state and local noise ordinances and shall allocate resources adequate to ensure meaningful enforcement in all urban jurisdictions within their states.

(e) LOCAL HEALTH OFFICERS shall conduct biennial community noise health assessments in jurisdictions with populations exceeding 50,000 and shall report findings to state and federal authorities in a format specified by the Administrator.

(f) SCHOOL BOARD OFFICIALS shall ensure that schools located in high-noise zones receive acoustic retrofits under available federal and state grant programs and shall incorporate noise health education into public school health curricula.

SECTION 5. REQUIREMENTS BY CORPORATIONS

(a) MANUFACTURERS OF VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT shall comply with noise emission standards promulgated by the Administrator for all products sold or offered for sale within the United States. Compliance shall be certified by an independent, accredited acoustical testing laboratory prior to market entry. All products shall be affixed with a noise output rating label specifying maximum decibel emission under standard operating conditions.

(b) CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES operating within urban areas designated under this Act shall submit a Noise Management Plan to the relevant local authority prior to commencing any project expected to last more than five consecutive business days. The Noise Management Plan shall include the types and noise emission ratings of all equipment to be used, hours of operation, acoustic barrier specifications, and a community notification protocol.

(c) AIRLINES AND AIRCRAFT OPERATORS shall transition their fleets to Stage 5 noise certified aircraft no later than December 31, 2030. Airlines shall adopt continuous descent approach procedures at all airports adjacent to residential areas where technically feasible. Airlines shall provide annual noise exposure reports to the FAA disaggregated by airport.

(d) FREIGHT RAIL OPERATORS shall, within five years of enactment, replace all freight rail vehicles with high-noise wheel and brake systems with quieter composite brake block technology meeting standards set by the Federal Railroad Administration consistent with European Union practices.

(e) REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS shall commission and publicly disclose a certified acoustic impact assessment for all proposed residential or mixed-use developments within 500 feet of a designated highway, freight rail line, airport flight path, or industrial facility. Mitigation measures identified in the assessment shall be incorporated into the final project design as a condition of federal or state approval.

(f) EVENT VENUE OPERATORS holding permits for outdoor events with amplified sound shall install real-time noise monitoring equipment at the perimeter of the venue and shall cease or reduce amplification when measurements exceed locally applicable nighttime or daytime noise limits for a period of more than 15 consecutive minutes.

(g) TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND UTILITY COMPANIES installing or maintaining infrastructure in urban areas shall use vibration-damped and acoustically isolated equipment wherever technically feasible and shall restrict non-emergency maintenance activities to daytime hours.

SECTION 6. REQUIREMENTS BY PRIVATE CITIZENS

(a) PRIVATE VEHICLE OPERATORS shall maintain their vehicles in compliance with applicable state vehicle noise inspection requirements and shall not operate a vehicle with a modified exhaust system that causes noise emissions in excess of applicable federal or state standards.

(b) HOMEOWNERS AND RENTERS who operate motorized lawn, garden, or recreational equipment within urban or suburban areas shall restrict use of such equipment to daytime hours between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM on weekends and holidays.

(c) PRIVATE CITIZENS may apply for noise insulation grants authorized under Section 3(c)(2) of this Act by submitting an application to the applicable state housing agency demonstrating residency in a federally designated high-noise zone and meeting applicable income eligibility requirements.

(d) RESIDENTS OF URBAN AREAS shall be encouraged to report persistent noise violations through municipal hotlines or digital reporting applications established under local noise ordinances adopted pursuant to this Act. Municipal authorities shall respond to verified complaints within 5 business days.

(e) PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS who operate commercial enterprises that generate significant noise, including restaurants, bars, auto repair facilities, and landscaping companies, shall comply with all applicable municipal and state noise ordinances and shall, upon written notice from the relevant enforcement authority, undertake noise mitigation measures within 60 days.

SECTION 7. PENALTY CLAUSES

(a) CIVIL PENALTIES. Any person who violates any provision of this Act or any regulation promulgated thereunder shall be liable to the United States for a civil penalty of not more than $50,000 per day for each day of violation, as determined by the Administrator after notice and an opportunity for a hearing.

(b) CRIMINAL PENALTIES. Any person who knowingly and willfully violates any provision of this Act after receiving notice of a violation and failing to remedy it within the specified period shall be fined not more than $500,000 per violation or imprisoned for not more than two years, or both.

(c) CORPORATE PENALTIES. For corporations found in willful or repeated violation of this Act, the Administrator may issue an order requiring the corporation to cease the violating activity within 48 hours, publicly disclose the violation on its corporate website, and pay a penalty calculated at $100,000 per day per violation.

(d) EQUITABLE RELIEF. The Attorney General, at the request of the Administrator, may seek injunctive relief in any district court of the United States to enjoin any person from violating or continuing to violate this Act.

(e) CITIZEN SUITS. Any person may commence a civil action on behalf of themselves or on behalf of a class of similarly affected persons against any person, corporation, or

government entity alleged to be in violation of this Act, in any district court of competent jurisdiction.

(f) FEDERAL AGENCY VIOLATIONS. Federal agencies that fail to comply with the requirements of this Act shall be subject to mandatory reporting to Congress and to a reduction in discretionary appropriations for the following fiscal year of not less than 5 percent.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATES AND IMPLEMENTATION

(a) GENERAL EFFECTIVE DATE. Except as otherwise provided in this Act, this Act shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment.

(b) FEDERAL AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION. Each federal agency required to take action under this Act shall develop and submit to Congress and the Administrator an implementation plan within 365 days of enactment, including timelines, resource requirements, and measurable milestones.

(c) STATE IMPLEMENTATION. States shall have two years from the date of enactment to adopt implementing legislation or regulations consistent with the requirements of this Act. States that fail to do so within this period shall be subject to direct federal enforcement of national ambient noise standards within their jurisdictions.

(d) CORPORATE COMPLIANCE DEADLINES. Corporations required to submit Noise Management Plans under Section 5(b) shall do so beginning on the effective date. Airlines shall achieve fleet compliance with Stage 5 noise standards by December 31, 2030. Freight rail operators shall complete brake system upgrades by December 31, 2029.

(e) PHASED IMPLEMENTATION. The Administrator shall publish a phased implementation schedule for all regulatory actions required under this Act within 90 days of enactment, identifying interim milestones and compliance checkpoints for all regulated entities.

(f) PROGRESS REPORTING. The Administrator shall submit to Congress an annual report on the progress of implementation of this Act, including enforcement actions taken, reductions in measured urban noise levels, and an assessment of public health outcomes attributable to Act implementation.

SECTION 9. APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGETARY NOTES

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated:

(1) To the Environmental Protection Agency, $500,000,000 for fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter for the purposes of establishing and operating the Office of Noise Abatement and Control, conducting national noise monitoring, promulgating regulations, and funding state implementation grants.

(2) To the Department of Transportation, $2,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter for noise barrier installation, transit electrification grants, highway noise mitigation, and the National Quiet Freight Initiative.

(3) To the Department of Housing and Urban Development, $1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter for the Residential Noise Insulation Grant Program and acoustic standards enforcement.

(4) To the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, $100,000,000 for fiscal year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter for noise rule development, enforcement, and employer compliance assistance.

(b) GRANTS TO STATES AND LOCALITIES. Of the amounts appropriated to the Environmental Protection Agency under subsection (a)(1), not less than 40 percent shall be distributed as competitive grants to state and local governments for noise abatement program development, monitoring infrastructure, enforcement capacity, and public outreach.

(c) RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. Of the amounts appropriated to the Environmental Protection Agency under subsection (a)(1), not less than 10 percent shall be allocated for research and development of noise reduction technology, including grants to universities, nonprofit research institutions, and private sector entities for the development of quieter transportation, construction, and industrial technologies.

(d) OFFSETTING REVENUES. Congressional Budget Office estimates of costs associated with implementation of this Act shall be prepared in accordance with standard budget scoring procedures. It is the intent of Congress that civil and criminal penalties collected under Section 7 shall be deposited into a dedicated Noise Abatement Trust Fund to supplement appropriated amounts.

ENDNOTES

1. The noise reduction requirements and approaches reflected in Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this bill draw upon the legislative and regulatory frameworks of the following countries:
2. Suomi (Act on Environmental Protection, 527/2014, https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2014/en20140527);
3. Norge (Pollution Control Act, Forurensningsloven, https://www.miljodirektoratet.no);
4. Sverige (Environmental Code, SFS 1998:808, https://www.naturvardsverket.se);
5. Danmark (Environmental Protection Act LBK No. 1218/2019, https://www.mst.dk);
6. Schweiz (Federal Noise Abatement Ordinance LSV/OPB SR 814.41, https://www.bafu.admin.ch);
7. Österreich (Environmental Noise Act BGBl. I Nr. 60/2005, https://www.bmk.gv.at);
8. New Zealand (Resource Management Act 1991, https://environment.govt.nz); and
9. Iceland (Regulation on Noise Pollution No. 933/2016, https://www.ust.is).