

Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition

Citizens seeking relief from helicopter noise – A problem for more than 40 years

LAHelicopterNoise.org February 10, 2014

President

Bob Anderson

Sherman Oaks

Homeowners Association

Vice President

Richard Root

Riviera (Torrance)

Homeowners Association

Treasurer

Dave Garfinkle

Tarzana Property Owners

Association

George Abrahams

Beachwood Canyon

Neighborhood Association

John Bailey

Southeast Torrance

Homeowners Association

Gerry Hans

Friends of Griffith Park

David Rankell

Van Nuys Airport

Citizens Advisory Council

Mike Savidan

Mayor, City of Lomita

Donna Sievers

Bluff Heights (Long Beach)

Neighborhood Association

Gerald A. Silver

Homeowners of Encino

Rudy Whitcomb

Rolling Hills Estates

Wayne Williams

Van Nuys Airport

Citizens Advisory Council

Board of Airport Commissioners
Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA)
City of Los Angeles
Post Office Box 92216
Los Angeles, California 90009-2216

Subject: OPPOSITION TO LAX HELIPORT

Members of the Board of Airport Commissioners:

The Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition (LAAHNC) understands that LAWA is considering issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to operate a heliport at LAX. We are concerned about the helicopter noise such a project would add in Los Angeles County.

LAAHNC is a voluntary group comprising residents from across L.A. County. Our mission is to recover and improve residents' quality of life by reducing helicopter noise, without compromising safety. Our board consists of individuals who were originally requested by Congressman Howard Berman, in 2012, to represent the interests of the community in meetings with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and helicopter operators. We have continued in that capacity for Congressman Adam Schiff, the sponsor of the Los Angeles Helicopter Noise Relief Act of 2013, and one of the primary leaders of the effort.

L.A. County is plagued with helicopter noise. Many residents say the number of helicopter flights above their homes is excessive and the noise they cause on the ground is intolerable. The noise interferes with their ability to hear conversation, television, radio, and telephone. It interferes with sleep. It limits the enjoyment of property and impacts the quality of residents' lives. Repetitive flyovers are annoying.

Most helicopters fly low under Visual Flight Rules (VFR). There are no mandatory routes or altitudes. Unlike fixed wing aircraft, which the FAA requires to fly at least 1,000 feet above the ground, helicopters have no specific minimum altitude requirements. Generally, except when under FAA Tower control at major airports such as LAX, helicopter pilots decide for themselves where and how high (or low) to fly. They typically fly below 1,000 feet and cause highly elevated noise levels in otherwise quiet residential neighborhoods.

This issue has been well documented by numerous government agencies that have acknowledged the problem and passed resolutions supporting the need for Federal legislation. Attachment 1 is a list of these agencies, which includes the City of Los Angeles (see the L.A. City Council resolution in Attachment 2).

LAAHNC has participated in all major efforts relating to helicopter noise, and organized meetings with the FAA and pilots in an attempt to alleviate the problem. But, progress has been slow and no tangible solutions have been found. The FAA has not been able to provide any counts on the number of helicopter flights that take place in our skies. However, they say that Los Angeles' airspace is one of the most crowded and complex in the country, that they

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are concerned about safety first, and that safety concerns limit their ability to correct the problem. The FAA is reluctant to establish helicopter flight regulations.

Last month, the United States Congress passed, and the President signed, legislation that included a rider requiring the Secretary of Transportation (through the FAA) to take steps to lessen helicopter noise impacts in Los Angeles (see the rider in Attachment 3). This is a step in the right direction. But, despite the best efforts being made by stakeholders, it appears that a significant reduction in helicopter noise is far from being achieved in the foreseeable future.

The heliport would have significant noise impacts on the public – not just near LAX, but also near far-off destinations and origination points, and along the routes helicopters would travel in between. The FAA has published recommended routes for helicopter pilots to use when transiting Los Angeles, but pilots are not required to use them and the environmental impacts of these routes have never been assessed. We do not think this is the time to exacerbate the problem by creating a heliport that is certain to add more helicopter traffic and noise to an already crowded and overly noisy airspace in Los Angeles.

Accordingly, LAAHNC is opposed to the heliport at this time and we respectfully request that LAWA not proceed with the RFP.

Sincerely,



Bob Anderson
President, LAAHNC

Attachment 1: List of Supporters for Congressional Action on Helicopter Noise Relief
Attachment 2: Resolution by the L.A. City Council Supporting Federal Noise Legislation
Attachment 3: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (excerpt of helicopter noise rider)

cc: Gina Marie Lindsey, Chief Executive Officer, LAWA
Mayor and City Council of Los Angeles
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Congressman Adam Schiff
Congressman Brad Sherman
Congressman Henry Waxman
Congresswoman Janice Hahn
Congressman Tony Cardenas
Congresswoman Karen Bass
Congressman Alan Lowenthal
LA County Board of Supervisors
Mayors and City Council members of LA area cities impacted
Members of the California Senate and Assembly in districts impacted

Attachment 1
List of Supporters for Congressional Action on Helicopter Noise Relief

Senate Sponsors of S 208, Los Angeles Residential Helicopter Noise Relief Act of 2013

Dianne Feinstein – Lead Sponsor
Barbara Boxer

House Sponsors of HR 456, Los Angeles Residential Helicopter Noise Relief Act of 2013

Adam Schiff (CA 28) – Lead Sponsor
Brad Sherman (CA 30)
Henry Waxman (CA 33)
Janice Hahn (CA 44)
Tony Cardenas (CA 29)
Karen Bass (CA 37)
Alan Lowenthal (CA 47)

Cities supporting the Los Angeles Residential Helicopter Noise Relief Act of 2013 (S 208 & HR 456)

10/8/13 Long Beach City Council
8/26/13 Santa Monica City Council (also SJR 7)
8/26/13 California Assembly
6/24/13 Santa Monica Airport Commission (Also SJR 7)
5/8/13 Lax Community Noise Roundtable
5/7/13 Manhattan Beach City Council (Also SJR 7)
4/18/13 California Senate
4/8/13 Malibu City Council
4/8/13 Hidden Hills City Council
3/13/13 City of Rolling Hills Estates (HR 456)
3/6/13 Los Angeles City Council
3/5/13 Van Nuys Airport Citizens Advisory Council
3/4/13 West Hollywood City Council
2/19/13 Lomita City Council
2/15/13 Los Angeles County Board Of Supervisors (administrative action)

Cities supporting the Los Angeles Residential Helicopter Noise Relief Act of 2011 (HR 2677)

11/20/12 City of Beverly Hills
10/2/12 Redondo Beach City Council
8/14/12 Los Angeles City Council
8/6/12 California State Senate
3/27/12 Hermosa Beach City Council
3/26/12 California State Assembly
2/14/12 Palos Verdes Estates City Council
1/24/12 Rolling Hills Estates City Council
1/11/12 Lax Community Noise Roundtable
1/3/12 Lomita City Council
12/20/11 Rancho Palos Verdes City Council
11/8/11 Los Angeles County Board Of Supervisors
7/29/11 West Hollywood City Council

Attachment 2
Resolution by the L.A. City Council Supporting Federal Noise Legislation

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, for many years, Los Angeles residents have suffered from high levels of noise pollution due to low-flying helicopters; and

WHEREAS, there has been an increasing number of paparazzi, tourist, and other non-necessary helicopters jamming the skies of Los Angeles and hovering at a low altitude, creating safety and privacy concerns and leaving the citizens of Los Angeles with no legal recourse; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has failed to address the numerous complaints from Los Angeles residents and to protect them from the excessive noise associated with low-altitude flights; and

WHEREAS, on February 5, 2013, Congressman Adam Schiff, Congressman Henry Waxman, and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer introduced H.R. 456 and S. 208, respectively, the Los Angeles Residential Helicopter Noise Relief Act of 2013, which would require the FAA to set guidelines on flight paths and minimum altitudes for helicopter operations in Los Angeles County within 12 months of enactment, with exemptions for law enforcement, emergency responders, and U.S. military; and

WHEREAS, greater local authority is also needed for helicopter operations for emergency, law enforcement, public utilities or military purposes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2013-2014 Federal Legislative Program **SUPPORT** for S. 208, which would require the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to control flight paths and require minimum altitudes for helicopter operations in Los Angeles County, **IF AMENDED** (a) to provide that the FAA Administrator shall exempt from such regulations helicopter operations undertaken for emergency, law enforcement, public utilities or military purposes, including helicopter training operations for these same purposes; and (b) to provide that the FAA Administrator shall consider providing greater authority to law enforcement agencies to establish and enforce temporary flight restrictions when such restrictions would likely improve air safety conditions.

I CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING
RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED BY THE
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
AT ITS MEETING OF MAR 06 2013
BY A MAJORITY OF ALL ITS MEMBERS.



JUNE LAGMAY
CITY CLERK
BY Sharon Bruce
DEPUTY

Attachment 3
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (excerpt of helicopter noise rider)

H. R. 3547

AN ACT

Making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes.

Section 1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014.

Excerpt:

DIVISION L

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014

TITLE I

Department of transportation

Office of the Secretary

Sec. 119D. The Secretary shall (1) evaluate and adjust existing helicopter routes above Los Angeles, and make adjustments to such routes if the adjustments would lessen impacts on residential areas and noise-sensitive landmarks; (2) analyze whether helicopters could safely fly at higher altitudes in certain areas above Los Angeles County; (3) develop and promote best practices for helicopter hovering and electronic news gathering; (4) conduct outreach to helicopter pilots to inform them of voluntary policies and to increase awareness of noise sensitive areas and events; (5) work with local stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive noise complaint system; and (6) continue to participate in collaborative engagement between community representatives and helicopter operators: Provided, That not later than one year after enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall begin a regulatory process related to the impact of helicopter use on the quality of life and safety of the people of Los Angeles County unless the Secretary can demonstrate significant progress in undertaking the actions required under the previous proviso.