

## Senator Feinstein Press Release 1/14/14

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### **Feinstein Announces Helicopter Noise Legislation in Appropriations Bill**

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Will require the FAA to act on helicopter noise within a year

Jan 14 2014

*Washington*— Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) today announced that the omnibus appropriations bill – which will fund the government for the next year – includes a provision directing the Secretary of the Department of Transportation and FAA to address helicopter noise Los Angeles County skies. Residents of the Los Angeles region have been plagued for decades by frequent and disruptive helicopter noise, and despite persistent efforts to work on a collaborative basis with stakeholders to reduce the impact of helicopter noise, little has changed.

Last year, Feinstein, Schiff and other members of the Los Angeles delegation introduced legislation, the *Los Angeles Residential Helicopter Noise Relief Act*, and encouraged the FAA to act independently of legislation. Following a lengthy study, the FAA released their report on the Los Angeles airspace, urging voluntary measures over a regulatory approach, which many homeowners and lawmakers felt was an insufficient response. This legislation, which is expected to be voted on this week, will finally force the FAA to act.

**“I am pleased the omnibus federal funding bill includes a provision to reduce excessive helicopter noise in the Los Angeles Basin,”** said Senator Feinstein. **“I have worked on this issue with Congressman Schiff, Senator Boxer and others for more than two years, and this bill will finally lead to concrete action. The provision requires the FAA to initiate regulations addressing helicopter noise and safety issues above Los Angeles within one year, unless the agency can demonstrate that the six voluntary measures it recommended in May have proven to be effective. The FAA must also move forward with those six voluntary measures immediately. I am optimistic this provision will improve the quality of life for millions of people living in Los Angeles.”**

**“For years, the FAA has not felt the urgency that homeowners and residents across Los Angeles County have felt – very literally with the rattling of windows – on the need to reduce helicopter noise,”** said Representative Schiff. **“While we are continuing to work with the FAA on voluntary measures, we need to take an ‘all of the above’ approach towards solving this issue – including new rules and regulations. With this legislation, FAA will have one year to act on its pledge to reduce helicopter noise or it will be forced to regulate.”**

Senator Feinstein, with the support of Schiff and Los Angeles delegation members, successfully included language in the Senate transportation appropriations bill and ultimately the omnibus spending bill that will be voted on later this week that would require the FAA to develop regulations related to the impact of helicopter use on the quality of life of LA County residents within one year unless the FAA can demonstrate the effectiveness of the six action items in the helicopter noise report. Efforts to include language in the omnibus were supported by the Los Angeles Helicopter Noise Coalition (LAHNC).

Below is the provision included in the appropriations bill:

- 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 the development of regulations 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 the effectiveness of actions taken under the previous proviso to address helicopter noise.

This legislation will hold the FAA's feet to the fire and will ensure that the agency will complete their work on time and without delay. If after a year, residents, homeowners and business owners do not see a marked difference and reduction in the level of unnecessary helicopter noise, the legislation will require the FAA to set new rules and regulations – something that they thus far have been unwilling to do.

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