

Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition

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

April 26, 2019

LAHelicopterNoise.org

Chair
Richard Root
*Founder, Citizens for
Quiet Helicopters
(Torrance)*

The Honorable Sheila Kuehl
Los Angeles County Supervisor, District 3
821 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

ADVANCE COPY VIA EMAIL

Treasurer
Dave Garfinkle
*Tarzana Property Owners
Association*

Dear Supervisor Kuehl:

Gerry Hans
Friends of Griffith Park

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR COUNTY FUNDING OF HELICOPTER NOISE COMPLAINT SYSTEM

Mike Savidan
Councilman, City of Lomita

Recently you introduced a motion, which the Board approved on the consent agenda, to send a letter from the Board of Supervisors to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) urging them to continue funding the Los Angeles Automated Helicopter Noise Complaint System (ACS). Our organization, the Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition (LAAHNC), sincerely appreciates your effort to respond to the request of stakeholders who have been working on this growing problem. However, there may have been a misunderstanding.

Donna Sievers
*Bluff Heights (Long Beach)
Neighborhood Association*

Gerald A. Silver
Homeowners of Encino

The stakeholders, including our organization which represents the community, and pilot groups who represent the helicopter industry, are requesting that the County consider funding the complaint system. The FAA made it clear from the outset that they would only fund the system temporarily. They have consistently maintained they will no longer fund it, despite requests from our local members of Congress. We are quite certain that additional requests to the FAA will be futile.

Rudy Whitcomb
Rolling Hills Estates

Wayne Williams
*Van Nuys Airport
Citizens Advisory Council*

As you know, the stakeholders have been working on this issue for many years, but achieving actual noise reduction has been challenging. LAAHNC has formally petitioned the FAA to issue mandatory regulations governing helicopter flights in Los Angeles County, but the FAA has denied our requests. Most helicopters fly by Visual Flight Rules (VFR). They are not subject to direction from FAA flight controllers, except when near an airport with a tower. Instead, individual pilots decide where and how high (or low) to fly over most of Los Angeles County, without even a minimum altitude.

Accordingly, efforts to reduce helicopter noise are currently limited to “voluntary measures” on the part of pilots. Community and industry representatives both agree that a complaint system is crucial to this effort. Data from the system helps identify “hot spots” where helicopter noise is acute. Specific “Fly Neighborly” guidelines can be developed in addition to the industry’s existing general noise abatement guidelines. Pilots who are found to have ignored guidelines can be contacted, made aware of the concern, and encouraged to conform.

LAAHNC Letter to Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

Helicopter noise is a County-wide environmental and quality of life issue. Flying at low altitudes is also a safety issue, as helicopter pilots can better react to unexpected emergencies at higher altitudes. The County has five airports with substantial helicopter operations. The County also owns and operates one of the largest helicopter fleets in the region. A properly functioning complaint system will help the County assess the magnitude of the impact of helicopter noise on its residents. Therefore, we believe the relatively small cost for such a system (under \$50,000/annually) would be an appropriate use of County funds.

We hope you will consider this request. We are happy to meet with you or your staff at your earliest convenience to discuss this concept in more detail, get your thoughts, and see if you can support this request.

Sincerely,



Richard Root, Chair
Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition

cc: Via email:

Supervisor Hilda Solis, First District
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second District
Supervisor Janice Hahn, Fourth District
Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Fifth District