

U,S, Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration

JUL 27 2016

Mr. Richard Root,  
Vice President Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition  
P.O. Box 571448 Tarzana, CA91357-1448  
Dear Mr. Root:

I received your letter, dated July 5, 2016, regarding the voluntary offshore helicopter routes that were recently published.

As we've noted from the beginning of this process, FAA does not believe a regulatory approach is well suited to resolving helicopter noise issues in Los Angeles County. Continued collaborative efforts to develop voluntary measures has been our operating premise and as you noted in your letter it appeared there were good faith efforts amongst the parties to reach some accommodations. While progress was at times elusive at least the parties remained at the table engaged in dialogue.

In October 2015, however, LAAHNC set course down the regulatory path, petitioning FAA to establish four separate special federal aviation regulations (SFARs) for Los Angeles County. One of the SFAR petitions specifically requested mandatory use of an LA County shoreline helicopter route at 0.5 to 1.0 mile offshore.

The FAA has been engaged with LAAHNC and representatives of local helicopter operators since 2013, participating in excess of fifty collaboration meetings with all parties. One initiative that was discussed thoroughly was the offshore route.

Building on this previous work and input from stakeholders, FAA continued to work on the voluntary offshore helicopter route options. As part of this process FAA conducted a safety review of the proposed offshore routes with direct participation of the pilots / operators that would be utilizing these routes if adopted. As required of any federal agency, FAA also considered the potential environmental effects of this action. In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures, FAA determined that there were no extraordinary circumstances and this action was categorically excluded from any further environmental review.

On April 29,2016, FAA met with LAAHNC members to discuss several items, including FAA's intent to publish the offshore route this summer. On May 20,2016 the FAA denied LAAHNC's four SFAR petitions. The denial letter for the LAAHNC's LA County

shoreline helicopter route indicated FAA was developing a voluntary offshore route. On July 23,2016 the voluntary offshore helicopter routes were published. The offshore route contains two sections, the Palisades and South Bay, both of which are intended to be flown 750 feet from shoreline.

Attached, is a copy of the environmental document (categorical exclusion) prepared for this federal action.

FAA does not plan to rescind the new offshore route so recently implemented. A reversion to the status quo would be a clear step backward in terms of identifying and implementing potential voluntary measures to address noise sensitive areas in Los Angeles County. We do not see implementation of this measure as the final step in addressing coastal proximate noise concerns, rather it is a necessary first step and one that we hope can be built upon to provide beneficial results to community residents.

Sincerely,

(Signed by Tamara Swan)

Glen A. Martin  
Regional Administrator

attachment