



TOWN OF RIVERHEAD

Sean M. Walter, Town Supervisor

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ELECTED OFFICIALS UNITE TO FIGHT HELICOPTER NOISE

CIVIC ACTIVISTS JOIN IN CALL FOR NEW HELICOPTER PATHWAY

FOR RELEASE: Monday, June 28, 2010

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Riverhead Town Supervisor Sean M. Walter and the Riverhead Town Board will host a press conference among a diverse group of elected officials and civic activists to offer a helicopter noise abatement plan for the North Fork and eastern Brookhaven town.

The press conference will be held on **Monday, June 28th at 10:00 a.m.** in the overflow beach parking lot on Creek Road (west of La Plage restaurant on the south side of the road) in Wading River.

Among those invited to attend the media event are: Riverhead Town Supervisor Sean M. Walter, Riverhead Town Council members John Dunleavy, James Wooten, George Gabrielsen and Jodi Giglio, Brookhaven Town Councilwoman Jane Bonner, Suffolk County Legislators Ed Romaine and Daniel Losquadro. New York State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle and New York State Assemblyman Marc Alessi. Members of local civic groups will also be in attendance.

Supervisor Walter said, "With the Federal government ready to make its decision on flight paths to the Hamptons, it is important that we make our voices heard over the sound of chopper blades so that we may enjoy a summer of calm in eastern Suffolk County."

"Every summer well heeled 'Hamptonites' invade the East End in their flying machines making every community from New York City to Montauk sound like an episode of M*A*S*H. We urge the Federal government to adopt an offshore helicopter route and to make these commuter copters fly at higher altitudes so that Long Islanders can enjoy the peace and quiet they came here for," Brookhaven Town Councilwoman Jane Bonner added.

Senator Kenneth P. LaValle stated, "It is my hope that the FAA will be mindful of the concerns of our residents. No one community should be burdened with excess helicopter traffic and noise. Travel over water on either the north or south shore should be the route strictly enforced by the FAA. We are also calling on the FAA to enforce a minimum flight altitude of 3000 feet."

Assemblyman Marc Alessi said, "I am pleased the FAA has finally agreed to regulate helicopter traffic on Long Island. Too long has this been a problem for our local communities, whose quality of life has suffered from the noise generated by countless helicopters flying overhead. I have repeatedly urged the FAA to adopt regulations that would require helicopters traveling to a south shore destination to use a south shore route, with the same rules applying to the north shore. Both routes should be one mile out over water and at a minimum altitude of 3000 feet. Above all, we must ensure that no one community is over burdened by helicopter traffic when the aircrafts must traverse over land, by setting up multiple exit points and time windows."

"I am pleased the FAA has finally instituted rules to regulate helicopter traffic over Long Island. For far too long low flying helicopters have had a negative impact on the quality-of-life of many Long Islanders. However, while the published North Shore Helicopter route establishes a minimum altitude of 2,500 feet and directs traffic to 'proceed to destination over unpopulated areas where possible,' the new rule should be clear that these two directives are not optional, but are required," commented Suffolk County Legislator Ed Romaine.

Legislator Romaine continued to state, "Moreover, the decision of what is defined as an 'unpopulated area' should not be left up to individual pilots. The FAA should establish waypoints along unpopulated areas of the East End of Long Island, like over Plum Island, which must be followed by pilots heading from the North Shore route to the South Fork. Leaving this discretion up to pilots will not significantly reduce the overflight burden that exists in parts of eastern Brookhaven, Riverhead, Southold, Shelter Island, and Southampton."

The deadline for comments on this issue is Friday, June 25th. Comments prepared by the Town of Riverhead will be available to the press at Monday's event.

Supervisor Walter concluded, "Forcing helicopters to fly at higher altitudes and over waterways may add a few minutes to a flight to the Hamptons for the few, but, the noise abatement will make for more pleasant summers for the residents we represent."

All media is invited to attend the June 28th event.