

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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April 16, 2024
Start: 10:19 a.m.
Recess: 2:14 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Amanda Farías, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Erik D. Bottcher
Jennifer Gutiérrez
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Inna Vernikov

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Christopher Marte
Gale A. Brewer
Lincoln Restler

A P P E A R A N C E S

Jennifer Sun, Executive Vice President of Planning for the New York City Economic Development Corporation

Mikelle Adgate, Senior Vice President of Government and Community Relations Department for the New York City Economic Development Corporation

Anton Fredrikson, Director of Aviation for the New York City Economic Development Corporation

Carleen McLaughlin, Director of Legislative Affairs for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection

Mark Page, Executive Director of the Bureau of Environmental Compliance for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection

Daniel Wiley, Representative of Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez

Lacey Tauber, Representative of Borough President Levine and Borough President Reynoso

Sam Goldstein, Downtown Heliport

Lydon Sleeper, East Policy Lead with Joby Aviation

Stacy Sheard, Eastern Region Helicopter Council

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Brittany Davies, Northeast Regional Director for
the National Business Aviation Association

Josh Rousseau, Northeast U.S. Regional
Representative for Vertical Aviation
International

William Thomas, board member of Stop the Chop New
York/New Jersey

Andrew Rosenthal, Stop the Chop New York/New
Jersey

Melissa Elstein, board member of Stop the Chop
New York/New Jersey and board member of West 80s
Neighborhood Association

Lara Birnback, Executive Director of the Brooklyn
Heights Association and advisory board member of
Stop the Chop New York/New Jersey

Kenneth Lay, Brooklyn resident and a board member
of Stop the Chop New York/New Jersey

Roger Manning, co-founder of the Metro Area
Governors Island Coalition

Stephen Tannenbaum, Prospect Park South
Association

Janet Handal, President of the Waterside Tenants
Association in Manhattan

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Michael Hannaman, legal extern at the Natural Resources Defense Council and a law student at NYU School of Law

Merritt Birnbaum, President and Chief Executive Officer of Riverside Park Conservancy

Roland Lewis, consultant to Stop the Chop

Ken Coughlin, Manhattan Community Board 7 and board member of Stop the Chop New York/New Jersey

Warrie Price, Founder and President of the Battery Conservancy

Alex Matthiessen, Stop the Chop

Mark Young, South Midwood Residents Association

Susanne Lee, Hudson Classical Theatre Company

Norrice Raymaker, St. Anthony Neighborhood Houses

Kate Madigan, The Public Theater

Diane Park, Waterside Plaza

Dorothy Lyon

Brenda Quattrini

Ana Maria Jomolca

Christine Collister

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Jason Ehrich

Moonira Keghida

John Ost

David Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald family in Marine
Park, Brooklyn

Philip Turner

John Wilkens

Christopher Widgren

Sydney Garcia Widgren

Judy Mann, volunteer tour guide on Governor's
Island

Stan O'Connor, licensed tour guide

Peter Maloney, South Midwood Residents
Association

Arlene Bronzaft, Professor Emeritus of the City
University of New York and member of the board of
GrowNYC

Debra Lapadula

Dorinne Tye

Mark Diller

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Michael McCready

Sam Pesin, President of the Friends of Liberty
State Park

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Check, check. This is a
3 mic check on the Committee on Economic Development,
4 located on the 16th Floor, recorded on April 16,
5 2024, by Patrick Kurzyna, check.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please. Thank
7 you.

8 Good morning and welcome to the New York
9 City hybrid hearing of the Committee on Economic
10 Development.

11 Please silence all electronic devices.

12 If you have any questions, please raise
13 your hand, and one of us, the Sergeant-at-Arms, will
14 kindly assist you.

15 At no time, please, do not approach the
16 dais.

17 Thank you very much for your kind
18 cooperation.

19 Chair, we are ready to begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: [GAVEL] Good morning,
21 folks. I really quickly wanted to start off today
22 reading a quote from my Committee's predecessor,
23 former Council Member Paul Vallone, from post my last
24 helicopter hearing that reads, "love watching you and
25 your hearings. So very proud. Keep kicking butt," he

2 used a different word, but butt, "love, Paul," which
3 I thought was great because here we are again
4 bringing it back to a topic that was really important
5 to him during this hearing while Chairing this
6 Committee.

7 Good morning and welcome to today's
8 hearing on the New York City Council's Committee on
9 Economic Development. I am Majority Leader Amanda
10 Fariás, and I have the privilege of Chairing this
11 Committee. I want to thank my Colleagues on the
12 Committee for being here today as well as the
13 representatives from EDC, DEP, advocates, and members
14 of the public who have joined us. I'd like to note
15 that we've been joined by Council Members Bottcher
16 and Marte.

17 Today's hearing will examine the
18 important issue of helicopter noise and safety in New
19 York City. Over the past five years, 3-1-1 has seen a
20 staggering 2,329 percent increase in helicopter noise
21 complaints. Exposure to the excessive noise produced
22 by helicopter flights has been associated with
23 serious health effects like high blood pressure,
24 cognitive impairment, and diminished reading
25 comprehension in children. It is simply unacceptable

2 for our communities to suffer these consequences for
3 the brief enjoyment of wealthy tourists who want to
4 ride in helicopters, especially considering that the
5 City receives relatively little revenue from these
6 flights.

7 In addition to the noise issue, we have
8 unfortunately seen several tragic helicopter
9 accidents over the years that have raised major
10 safety concerns. These include the deadly 2018 crash
11 in the East River that killed five passengers and a
12 2019 crash on the roof of a Manhattan building that
13 killed the pilot. In 2016, the City and the
14 helicopter tourism industry reached an agreement to
15 cut the number of sightseeing flights leaving from
16 the downtown Manhattan Heliport in half, resulting in
17 about 30,000 fewer flights per year. While this was
18 an important step forward, the surge in noise
19 complaints shows that it simply wasn't enough. More
20 needs to be done to protect the health and safety of
21 New Yorkers. That's why we are considering a series
22 of package of legislations today to address this
23 problem from multiple angles.

24 First, we have Intro. 26, which I
25 sponsor, that would restrict nonessential helicopter

2 operations at City-owned heliports to electric-
3 powered aircraft only. Electric helicopter technology
4 has come a long way in recent years with successful
5 demonstrations showing they are much quieter than
6 traditional combustion engine helicopters. This bill
7 has received strong support from key advocates who
8 agree it would make a real difference in cutting
9 helicopter noise and pollution. By leveraging the
10 City's control over its heliports, we can accelerate
11 the transition to cleaner and quieter helicopter
12 technology.

13 We have also Intro. 70 sponsored by
14 Council Member Restler, which would go a step further
15 and prohibit all non-essential helicopters from
16 operating at City-owned heliports.

17 Next, Intro. 27, which I also sponsored,
18 would require DEP to install sound meters to monitor
19 helicopter noise in impacted areas and provide
20 monthly public reports. This data is crucial for
21 effectively regulating the industry.

22 Finally, we have three resolutions before
23 the Committee. Resolution 85, sponsored by Council
24 Member Gennaro, calls on the State to establish a
25 noise tax on non-essential helicopter flights,

2 Resolution 226, sponsored by Council Member Brewer,
3 calls on the State to ban non-essential use of the
4 West 30th Street Heliport, and Resolution 233, also
5 sponsored by Council Member Brewer, calls on the FAA
6 to ban all non-essential helicopter flights over New
7 York City. While the FAA has jurisdiction over flight
8 paths and much of the airspace, the City can and must
9 use the tools at its disposal to protect our
10 residents. I look forward to hearing from the NYC EDC
11 and DEP about their efforts and plans to address
12 helicopter noise and safety. I also want to hear
13 feedback from advocates and the public on this
14 package of bills.

15 Before we begin, I'd like to remind folks
16 present today to please maintain decorum throughout
17 the hearing.

18 If you are here to testify, you will have
19 three minutes to speak when your name is called.
20 Please keep responses concise, you don't have to use
21 all of that time, so that everyone has a chance to be
22 heard. If you are unable to finish, please submit
23 your complete written testimony to
24 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

2 Just another quick note, if you agree
3 with something in this room, the public is to remain
4 silent. Please use the support gesture that I just
5 displayed.

6 Finally, I'd like to thank the Economic
7 Development Team here at the Council, Senior Counsel
8 Alex Paulenoff, Senior Policy Analyst William
9 Hongach, and Finance Analyst Glenn Martelloni for all
10 their hard work preparing for this hearing. I will
11 now turn it over to our Committee Counsel to
12 administer the oath.

13 I'd like to call up Mikelle Adgate from
14 EDC, Jennifer Sun from New York City Economic
15 Development Corporation, Anton Fredrickson from NYC
16 EDC, Carleen McLaughlin from DEP, and Mark Page from
17 DEP as well.

18 Before swearing in, I'm going to allow
19 Council Member Restler a moment to give an opening
20 statement regarding his bill.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
22 much, Madam Majority Leader and Chair. I really want
23 to just thank you for your leadership on this issue
24 for holding this hearing today. When I first
25 introduced a bill about helicopters early in our

2 first term, you were our first co-prime sponsor and
3 have been just a relentless champion, and we're
4 really fortunate to have you in this role and leading
5 in this really powerful way. I will tell you, walking
6 around the streets of the 33rd Council District just
7 on the other side of the bridge in Brooklyn, I hear
8 from neighbors more about how angry and frustrated
9 they are about helicopter noise than almost any other
10 issue, and people are just at their wits end. It's
11 like when they go out to Brooklyn Bridge Park, they
12 can't have a conversation with the person walking
13 next to them because the helicopter noise is too
14 loud. They don't want to be on the roof. They don't
15 want to be in their backyard. They don't want to even
16 be sitting on their stoop because the intensity of
17 the helicopter noise, and it's City-owned helipads,
18 and we've introduced Intro. 70 because we want to end
19 non-essential helicopter travel. We don't want
20 tourist flights hanging out over our neighborhoods,
21 just spewing fossil fuels into our community for
22 minutes on end. We don't want the wealthiest of the
23 wealthy getting on helicopter rides to JFK or the
24 Hamptons instead of taking public transit or cars
25 like the rest of us. It doesn't make any sense why

2 our taxpayer dollars are supporting these helipads
3 for a modest industry, creating a modest number of
4 jobs at huge negative impacts from a noise pollution
5 and air pollution standpoint, and I really do hope
6 that we're going to hear some positive things from
7 EDC today. I hope maybe even some warmth to Intro. 70
8 and other pieces of legislation that my Colleagues
9 have introduced because the status quo is totally
10 unacceptable, and we have to do better in reining in
11 this industry that is causing havoc and harm in our
12 neighborhoods each and every day. Thank you very
13 much.

14 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you, Council
15 Member.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL PAULENOFF: Alex
17 Paulenoff, Senior Counsel. Will all members of the
18 Administration who are testifying today please raise
19 your right hand.

20 Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth,
21 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
22 testimony today, and to respond honestly to Council
23 Member questions?

24 ADMINISTRATION PANEL: (INAUDIBLE)

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL PAULENOFF: Thank you.
3 You may begin when ready.

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Good
5 morning, Chair Fariás and Members of the Economic
6 Development Committee. My name is Jennifer Sun, and I
7 serve as the Executive Vice President of Planning for
8 the New York City Economic Development Corporation.
9 I'm joined by my colleagues, Mikelle Adgate, Senior
10 Vice President in our Government and Community
11 Relations Department and Anton Fredrickson, Director
12 of Aviation as well as Carleen McLaughlin and Mark
13 Page from the New York City Department of
14 Environmental Protection. We appreciate the
15 opportunity to testify about our work to reimagine
16 our heliports with a focus on sustainability and
17 innovation.

18 As you know, EDC is charged with creating
19 a vibrant, inclusive, and globally competitive
20 economy for all New Yorkers, which includes, but is
21 not limited to, promoting economic development and
22 stewardship of the City's waterfront assets. As one
23 part of EDC's waterfront management on behalf of the
24 City, we are responsible for the management of both
25 City-owned heliports, the East 34th Street Heliport

2 and the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, which we call
3 DMH. At both heliports, EDC acts as a contract
4 administrator for the concession agreements between
5 the City and the heliport operators. Aligned with our
6 commitment to combat climate change and reduce
7 transportation emissions, we are actively pursuing
8 initiatives to advance cleaner aviation technology
9 and optimize sustainable freight distribution. For
10 our aviation sector, this entails building the
11 infrastructure to support electric alternatives to
12 traditional helicopters while, for freight
13 distribution, it involves transitioning goods from
14 trucks to the City's waterways and sustainable micro-
15 freight. There is significant potential at our
16 waterfront assets, particularly the heliports to
17 creatively address sustainability challenges, enhance
18 efficiency and promote economic growth.

19 This past November, we announced our
20 vision for a first-of-its-kind hub for sustainable
21 transportation and deliveries at DMH. In connection
22 with this announcement, we piloted demonstration
23 flights of multiple electric vehicle takeoff and
24 landing, eVTOL, aircraft in an urban environment, a
25 world first. As we look to the future of sustainable

2 transportation and infrastructure, we are readying
3 our heliports for eVTOL aircraft, which have the
4 benefit of being an efficient, sustainable, and
5 quieter alternative to traditional helicopters. Under
6 this plan, DMH will aim to become the first heliport
7 in the world with the infrastructure to support
8 electric flight while also incorporating last mile
9 maritime freight distribution and delivering major
10 quality-of-life improvements for New Yorkers. The
11 innovation being introduced at DMH is emblematic of
12 how EDC and the City are activating infrastructure
13 assets to support our current and future
14 transportation needs. Both DMH and the East 34th
15 Street heliports are already critical NYC facilities
16 used by a wide range of entities and for a broad
17 array of purposes, including hospitals for organ
18 transplants, news outlets for reporting, the New York
19 City Police and Fire Departments responding to
20 emergency calls and other critical City operations as
21 well as chartered, private, and tour flights. As the
22 largest U.S. city and the U.S. capital for
23 international business, our City-operated heliports
24 are essential to maintaining corporate
25 competitiveness, ensuring life-sustaining and

2 emergency operations, and maintaining our tourism
3 sector. The heliports are also significant drivers of
4 economic activity, providing a total economic impact
5 of 78 million in the city and employing approximately
6 175 workers. As we envision the future role of our
7 heliports in supporting the City's goals, it remains
8 crucial to uphold their essential economic and
9 logistical functions. Both heliports within EDC's
10 purview, the East 34th Street heliport and DMH, are
11 public use heliports, a Federal Aviation
12 Administration designation that means a heliport is
13 available for use by the general public without a
14 requirement for prior approval of the owner or
15 operator. Public use facilities operate as the
16 refueling stations for helicopters traversing
17 throughout the northeast and tristate area. As public
18 use facilities, we cannot turn a helicopter away,
19 including a helicopter that takes off outside New
20 York City and wants to land at one of our heliports,
21 even if there is no prior approval. As you know,
22 primary responsibility for the regulation of U.S.
23 aviation and air transportation, including the
24 establishment of a national aviation noise policy,
25 and ultimate oversight of local airport noise and

2 access restrictions, is vested in the FAA. As a
3 result, the City and EDC have limited ability to
4 regulate traffic, access, and noise in New York City
5 airspace. Where the City does have the ability to
6 influence the industry is through our concession
7 agreements with our operators where we can
8 incentivize the industry to adopt cleaner and quieter
9 technologies and promote diverse uses at the
10 heliport. At both heliports, EDC acts as a contract
11 administrator for the concession agreements between
12 the City and the heliport operators. Day-to-day
13 management of heliport operations is handled by
14 Atlantic Aviation at East 34th Street and Saker
15 Aviation Services at the DMH. The concession
16 agreement set forth the terms and conditions under
17 which each facility operates, including the hours of
18 operation, maximum annual flight volumes, insurance
19 levels, and reporting requirements, including air
20 quality monitoring and route compliance.

21 The East 34th Street Heliport serves a
22 broad range of uses and is a base of operations for
23 emergency services, essential organ transport to
24 nearby hospitals, chartered and private flights, City
25 operations, and media. The Downtown Manhattan

2 Heliport, by design, is the only heliport that
3 permits tour flights. It also serves chartered and
4 private flights, NYP and other emergency services.
5 DMH is also the only heliport in New York City that
6 can accommodate presidential flights by Marine One
7 and its supporting aircraft.

8 While the heliports offer important
9 services for city hospitals, businesses, and
10 emergency personnel, we recognize that community
11 members have quality-of-life concerns regarding
12 helicopter noise, and we are committed to leveraging
13 our position in this space to address these concerns.
14 We have and continue to work collaboratively with the
15 FAA and industry to address noise challenges. As part
16 of this collaboration, we have negotiated flight caps
17 and established over water tour routes with the FAA
18 that fly at even higher altitudes than typically
19 possible in a highly complex airspace like New York
20 City to mitigate noise. We have also worked in
21 partnership with the Council and key stakeholders to
22 improve transparency and address community concerns.
23 We take our asset management responsibility very
24 seriously, and we are committed to working with the
25 Council to address noise impacts from helicopter

2 operations and data reporting on helicopter flights.
3 To this end, EDC monitors public complaints related
4 to all helicopter flights over New York City, not
5 just flights to and from the two EDC-managed
6 heliports. Under our process, after a member of the
7 public lodges a complaint through the City's 3-1-1
8 portal, this data is transmitted to EDC and the DMH
9 operator for review. The 3-1-1 data undergoes two
10 rounds of analysis. First, by our DMH operator and
11 then by an independent third-party consultant with
12 expertise in analyzing flight paths. Once both rounds
13 of analysis are complete, EDC compiles monthly
14 reports that are transmitted to the City Council,
15 elected officials, and relevant community boards. We
16 are committed to responding individually to each
17 complaint received and welcome the opportunity to
18 work with Council on how best to present the data in
19 our monthly reports. More recently, we have furthered
20 our commitment to addressing quality-of-life concerns
21 beyond just noise complaints through requirements and
22 recommendations laid out in our ongoing procurement
23 for a new DMH operating contract.

24 The updated Request for Proposals, or
25 RFP, we released in November 2023 explicitly seeks

2 proposals for an operator to advance a transition to
3 eVTOL aircraft and operations, diversify revenue
4 streams, and reduce helicopter tour operating hours.
5 Moreover, a key requirement of the RFP is to create
6 and operate a micro-distribution center as part of
7 the City's marine highway network that decreases the
8 City's reliance on trucks. More specifically, the RFP
9 requires upgrades to the DMH heliport to make it
10 ready for eVTOL aircraft as soon as they are
11 authorized for use by the FAA and incentivize eVTOL
12 use when feasible, reduction of tour hours by 30
13 percent with the new tour hours changing to 10 a.m.
14 to 5 p.m. as well as cutting Saturday operational
15 hours, the construction and operation of a micro-
16 distribution facility, an operating plan and schedule
17 for DMH to facilitate inbound freight deliveries by
18 water, this will integrate DMH into the City's wider
19 marine highway network, which will help push
20 deliveries onto the waterways and reduce diesel truck
21 trips, getting polluting and traffic causing trucks
22 off the roads and greening the city, improve data
23 collection and reporting on all flight activity in
24 addition to 3-1-1 complaints, plans to further reduce
25 takeoffs and landings of non-eVTOL tour and corporate

2 and/or personal chartered flights, introduction of
3 greenhouse gas emissions reporting, M/WBE
4 participation goal of 30 percent for site development
5 and construction work, and standing up a workforce
6 training program that improves access to available
7 career pathways in aviation, maritime,
8 transportation, logistics, and other relevant
9 sectors.

10 We are currently evaluating the DMH RFP
11 submissions and hope to select an operator for the
12 Downtown Manhattan Heliport by this fall. We are very
13 excited for the changes to come to DMH. By
14 incorporating significant steps to improve operations
15 at the heliport, lessen activities related to noise
16 complaints, and continue to improve low- and zero-
17 emission, energy efficient transportation beyond
18 helicopters, we hope to support sustainable aviation
19 and transportation operations citywide.

20 We are currently reviewing all the bills
21 that are being heard today with our colleagues at the
22 Law Department and look forward to continuing to work
23 with the Council, including updating you on the DMH
24 RFP and continuing to refine and improve our
25 helicopter data reporting. Thank you for the

2 opportunity to speak with you today, and we are happy
3 to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Thank you so much for
5 your testimony. I'd like to acknowledge that we've
6 been joined by Council Member Vernikov.

7 I appreciate the thorough testimony on
8 giving us a full update. I less appreciate not having
9 responses for each of the bills that are listed. Can
10 we get a timeline of when we're going to hear from
11 the Admin or from the agencies on your Law
12 Department's decision on the bills?

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Yeah, thank
14 you for the question, Council Member. We know that
15 the Law Department is reviewing each of the bills
16 together and, as part of their regular check-ins with
17 Council Legal, that these bills are being discussed
18 as part of that.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay, so when should
20 I expect, I mean usually you folks come with
21 testimony with some sort of response surrounding
22 support, not support.

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: I
24 definitely understand the question. Based on our
25 conversations with the Law Department, given the

2 complexity of the aviation sector and the
3 jurisdictional boundaries between the FAA and other
4 federal regulators and actors and the fact that the
5 City's authority may be subject to different
6 limitations, the Law Department has been using this
7 time to review more thoroughly and so, while I can't
8 speak on their behalf in terms of a timeline, I do
9 know that it is something that they are working on.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. I'm going to
11 take it as you all are wholeheartedly supportive of
12 every Intro. and Reso. then.

13 Okay. I'm going to jump right into some
14 of the Committee questions here. Can you provide an
15 update on the City's efforts to address helicopter
16 noise concerns since the 2016 agreement that reduced
17 tourist flights? Any successes and challenges?

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Thanks for
19 the question, Council Member. As I highlighted in my
20 testimony, we have renewed our focus on areas within
21 the concession agreement where we might have an
22 ability to further address quality-of-life complaints
23 and so, in this most recent procurement of the DMH in
24 seeking a new operator, we did require that the
25 respondents submit a plan from their perspective of

2 how they can work with EDC and the City Council in
3 further incentivizing helicopter operators to operate
4 in a way that has less emissions and less noise. For
5 example, in addition to the 50 percent reduction of
6 annual flights at DMH from 60,000 flights to 30,000
7 flights, we have required in this new procurement a
8 further reduction of operating hours by 30 percent,
9 and we're looking forward to a private response to
10 how they might further incentivize and diversify the
11 uses of the heliport so that there is an ongoing
12 reduction of helicopter tour flights from DMH over
13 time.

14 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And anything within
15 the RFP or what we're expecting to see from their
16 plans regarding transparency on their tail numbers or
17 anything like that, that goes through. I'm sure you
18 folks see the complaints from constituency or some of
19 the websites that are utilized to track who's
20 actually not following the rules per se and going
21 over residential properties so are there any
22 specifications listed there on what you expect to see
23 from their plans?

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: I'll ask
25 Anton to answer the question more directly about the

2 data that we're seeing around all helicopter flights
3 in New York City. What I'll share at a very high
4 level is that by looking at data for an approximately
5 one year period from, let's say, spring of 2023 to
6 the current period, what we're finding is that
7 overall about 4 percent of the complaints are coming
8 from the City-owned heliports, meaning that 96
9 percent of the complaints are attributed to flights
10 originating from other heliports outside of those
11 that are City-operated, but I'll ask Anton to
12 elaborate.

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Sure.

14 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Thank you and, of
15 that, 1 percent of all flights are tours from the
16 heliport to back up Jennifer's claim.

17 Separately, I wanted to address on the
18 flight activity side. This is a new requirement that
19 we're putting into our RFP so before we've looked at
20 complaints, but that's a subset of all flight
21 activity happening so as part of the new RFP, the
22 operator will be expected to develop a tool that'll
23 analyze all flight activity over New York City so we
24 have a more complete picture of all the activity and
25 can make more informed decisions from that.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And is that going to
3 be a public tool or is that going to be internal
4 between the operator itself and EDC?

5 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes, that
6 information is using publicly available information
7 through ADS-B data, and we can work with our operator
8 to see if we can make it more publicly accessible or
9 more easily digestible that data that's available
10 already publicly.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And have you seen any
12 efforts made that have brought in specific changes
13 that have been particularly effective in reducing
14 noise or answering for some of the data that we've
15 already aggregated over the years with complaints
16 (INAUDIBLE) the operators?

17 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yeah, we have a
18 consultant today at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport
19 that looks at all complaints, and already we're
20 rolling out and developing new tools to improve the
21 tracking so looking potentially even geofencing areas
22 of the city to get a complete picture of all activity
23 and not just looking at complaints as they come
24 through and categorizing those individual complaints.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And are there going
3 to be any penalties or anything associated with them
4 necessarily? Let's say they come up with a plan, we
5 have this transparent public tool that everyone can
6 see, which we already have different data sets and
7 tools that people can see that folks are in
8 violation, what then does the EDC have as a penalty
9 or a repercussion tool to then say this operator is
10 being a bad actor and not living up to the agreement.

11 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes, so we do have a
12 system in place today where there are penalties if
13 there is a repeated offense from that particular
14 operator. Now, we have to keep in into account that
15 there are occasionally reasons for a flight to veer
16 off course for weather or safety-related things so we
17 take that into account as well, and we will be always
18 looking to strengthen that in the new operating
19 agreement as well.

20 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: How many penalties
21 have you folks issued over the last year?

22 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: We can get that
23 information from you.

24 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: I would love that
25 information.

2 I just want to note too, I think
3 generally the public always understands when, let's
4 say bad weather, folks have to veer off. I think the
5 problem that we've seen, I mean over a decade, even
6 though I've only been here year three, is that that
7 information is not transparent and it's not actually
8 publicly made for use and I don't think anyone would
9 ever want anyone to put themselves in a dangerous
10 condition just because they're in a helicopter but,
11 if folks understand that connection, which I hope is
12 what you're aiming to gear towards more public
13 transparency of why people might be off course if
14 there is a reason to help validate people's lived
15 experiences of the issues that they're seeing every
16 day.

17 How does the Administration balance the
18 economic interest of the helicopter industry with the
19 health and quality-of-life concerns raised by
20 impacted communities?

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Thanks for
22 the question, Council Member. I think demonstrated by
23 our approach through the new procurement of balancing
24 the revenue that we're collecting from the operator
25 who manages the heliport day-to-day with the quality-

2 of-life concerns is really in the reduction of
3 operating hours so, in addition to the reduction by
4 50 percent in 2016, we're going further again in this
5 new procurement of reducing those operators by 30
6 percent. In addition to that, we're requiring a
7 private investment and charging infrastructure to
8 really reduce barriers for supporting the industry
9 and adopting eVTOL technology as soon as it becomes
10 available and is certified by the FAA.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And what steps does
12 the City take to ensure that community voices are
13 heard and considered in decisions related to
14 helicopter regulation?

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: So the 3-1-
16 1 complaints is certainly a primary source for
17 understanding where residents in New York City are
18 experiencing that noise in their neighborhoods, and
19 we do frequent engagement through community boards
20 and elected officials, and certainly that's a channel
21 in which we're hearing about quality-of-life concerns
22 as well.

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I would
24 just add to that, Council Member, I think the items
25 that we identified in the RFP, in terms of changes

2 that we're making for this new procurement, I would
3 say are almost a direct result of the conversations
4 that we've had with you, other Committee Members,
5 community boards, not just reducing the tour hours by
6 30 percent, but looking at improving data collection,
7 improving transparency, how those records so we do
8 take all of the feedback that we've gotten very
9 seriously and have baked that into the RFP.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yeah. I see that in
11 some of these bullets so that's appreciated.

12 Are there any examples of compromises
13 beyond the 2016 agreement that have been reached
14 through a collaboration with the industry and
15 community stakeholders?

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: I can't
17 share our negotiations with the respondents to the
18 RFP, but I look forward to being able to share that
19 as soon as we can once we're further along in our
20 process.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And how does the City
22 navigate the balance between the federal and local
23 authority when it comes to managing helicopter
24 traffic?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: We achieve
3 that balance through a strong partnership and an
4 ongoing conversation with the FAA and with the
5 helicopter industry, recognizing that, I think, where
6 EDC can have influence in policy is really through
7 those partnerships and through negotiated agreements
8 to try to achieve the right balance between
9 maintaining an economically viable heliport but also
10 being responsive to community concerns.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And can you discuss
12 the City's working relationship with the Federal
13 Aviation Administration?

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Yeah, I'll
15 share at a very high level and then Anton can
16 elaborate that we have, again, very active ongoing
17 conversations with the FAA to understand the latest
18 in terms of regulations at the federal level with
19 respect to noise and safety and also continuing to
20 talk about where together we can be responsive to the
21 Council and community concerns in going further than
22 what we've done already.

23 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Thank you, Council
24 Member. In addition to our constant engagement with
25 the Federal Aviation Administration, we're also proud

2 to participate in a series of symposia that the FAA
3 has convened with the helicopter industry. This is a
4 regional challenge, I think we I can all appreciate,
5 so it's going to take collaboration with stakeholders
6 outside of New York City as well, and we're proud to
7 be part of those discussions.

8 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Thank you and, in the
9 Administration's view, what's the most effective and
10 appropriate combination of local, state, federal
11 actions to address the impacts of helicopter traffic
12 on New York City communities?

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Thanks for
14 the question, Council Member. I think you just
15 touched upon it. It is about a partnership at all
16 levels of government both within New York City but
17 also engaging elected officials and constituents in
18 New Jersey as well, and then I think that's where the
19 federal elected officials as well as FAA has an
20 important role is recognizing that a lot of this
21 helicopter tour traffic doesn't only originate in New
22 York City but also in New Jersey and elsewhere, and
23 therefore the opportunity for addressing these
24 concerns more comprehensively really resides in a
25 regional and national approach.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay. I'd just like
3 to talk a little bit about 3-1-1 complaints. Can we
4 get how many 3-1-1 complaints about helicopters EDC
5 received last year, 2023, 2022, 2021?

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Yes. Let's
7 see. Do you?

8 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes. We received
9 approximately 50,000 noise complaints last year.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And do we have 2022?
11 I can pull it up.

12 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: I think it was about
13 25 off the top of my head.

14 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Oof. Okay. After
15 this, like offline, can we get maybe the last three
16 to four years of just top line totals so we can see
17 how that's increased, if we went nearly double in a
18 year. It's something for us to consider and look at.

19 Do we know how many 3-1-1 complaints came
20 from DMH or 34th Street were found to be justified?

21 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: We had less than 1
22 percent were tour flights originating from the
23 Downtown Manhattan Heliport.

24 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: But I mean justified
25 in that, the percentage were actually in violation to

2 their 3-1-1 complaint versus dismissed for lack of
3 jurisdiction or anything else. Do we know that
4 percentage?

5 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: We can get back to
6 you with that exact number.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Who's actually
8 responsible for investigating the 3-1-1 complaints
9 about New York City based helicopters?

10 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes. Thank you for
11 the question. Three layers, Economic Development
12 Corporation first receives the 3-1-1 data, we parse
13 through it then we pass that on to our private
14 heliport operator at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport,
15 who's responsible for all 3-1-1 complaints. They do a
16 thorough investigation of every individual complaint
17 and then categorizes that based on what type of
18 aircraft it was, even if there isn't enough
19 information, they will go in and triangulate which
20 flight that was to the best of their ability, and
21 then we have a third layer through an independent
22 third-party consultant that will then double check to
23 make sure each of those complaints was categorized
24 accurately then that's reported back to OTI and

2 updated to close the loop back with the original
3 complainant.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And the third-party
5 consultant, is that through EDC's contract, like a
6 separate contract through EDC or is that through the
7 operator's contract?

8 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes, it's a third-
9 party consultant through EDC.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay. I'd like to
11 talk a little bit more about that only because I do
12 understand that, I guess I want to better understand
13 what at our point at EDC, clearly we don't have, or
14 maybe you can explain, we need the third-party
15 consultants to verify because of technology systems,
16 capacity, like I would say we want as much of an
17 independent or municipal control over validating
18 complaints and violations, and obviously we have the
19 expectation that all of our operators are being
20 honest and justly evaluating their own complaints
21 that come through, but it's kind of like I'm not
22 going to tell on myself kind of thing, right, so we
23 want to make sure the third party, I'm trying to
24 better understand why you have a consultant and is it

2 because we don't necessarily have that capacity or
3 the technology necessary to validate and verify?

4 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Not yet, so that's
5 what we're hoping to achieve with this operating
6 agreement to have and develop that tool so that we
7 can be more informed. That's why we've started with
8 the consultant for that third-party check and, as
9 much as we appreciate the efforts of our operator,
10 sometimes complaints slip through and we want to be
11 able to catch every single one and make sure it's
12 categorized correctly.

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yeah, totally. That's
14 what I was trying to get at so that's where the tool
15 is coming in this new operation. Got it

16 All right, and then do we know why there
17 are 30,000 helicopter tourist flights from DMH not
18 showing up with their tail numbers on the flight
19 tracking app that's utilized?

20 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: I'm not aware of
21 flight tail numbers being hidden from the tour
22 operators. If there are instances of that, we will
23 have a look into it.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: There are a ton of
3 instances. I'll start sending you my tweets every
4 morning that I get from the folks.

5 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Even if the tail
6 number isn't there, I'll say we can still identify
7 which operator it is based on the type of aircraft,
8 where it is at that position, we can still identify
9 so it's not like these complaints are not being
10 accounted for?

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yeah, I think that is
12 the case. I think a lot of folks feel like their 3-1-
13 1 complaint is actually not being accounted for
14 because there's an inability for them to properly
15 report if the tail numbers are not being identified
16 or being able to be shown. We don't necessarily have,
17 we as the public, me speaking on behalf of the
18 public, don't necessarily have the tools that you
19 might have to do the tracking down of who that
20 operator is and whether or not they're in violation
21 in the moment that it is happening.

22 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: I wish we had
23 different tools or more improved tools. I'm working
24 with Flightradar24 on my iPhone like anyone else.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And then just quickly
3 on the response rate to constituent 3-1-1 complaints,
4 right? There are a lot of folks that issue complaints
5 into 3-1-1 system, and they rarely get any response
6 back that I think maybe feels validated or not, and I
7 think in the direct connection ends up getting super
8 frustrated and then eventually give up on making a
9 lot of those complaints so I think a lot of folks in
10 the public feel the numbers are skewed because there
11 are a ton of people that are just begrudgingly
12 tolerating what's happening around them. Is EDC fully
13 aware of that and that it's occurring and is that
14 being taken into consideration while developing this
15 new tool?

16 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Absolutely, and I'll
17 say, even if the respondent hasn't heard back on the
18 complaint, that complaint is still being counted for
19 and is part of the 50,000-plus that we have reported
20 on. I've personally filed my own 3-1-1 complaints,
21 still waiting to hear back on the one from last week,
22 so we recognize that there is a backlog and we're
23 trying to work through that. I will also point out
24 that a large uptick of these complaints are coming
25 from the same users so 90 percent are coming from the

2 top 20 complainants. Now all complaints are valid,
3 but it is often generated by the same user, many
4 times a day, sometimes with all their neighbors
5 addresses as well, and we take all of those
6 seriously. I just want to point out as well that
7 they're often repeated from the same users.

8 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yeah, I totally hear
9 that and that's understandable to look at that data
10 and see that it could be skewed in a way coming from
11 certain individual users but, all that to say is, a
12 lot of people just tolerate it and give up, like
13 apathy in local government is real and it's something
14 that I think all of us are fighting both as elected
15 officials and as City agencies to build more faith
16 and trust with the systems and operations that we
17 have in place for constituents.

18 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Absolutely.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: I'd like to talk a
20 little bit about the Heliport RFP. The RFP EDC issued
21 for the operation of the Downtown Manhattan Heliport
22 asked bidders to submit proposals to address quality-
23 of-life concerns arising from helicopter operations.
24 What concerns does EDC have regarding quality-of-life
25 issues?

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Yeah, I
3 think, Council Member, as we mentioned earlier, we
4 really tried to be responsive to the feedback that we
5 heard from yourself and your Colleagues and our
6 communities, and so some of the things that you see
7 here, the introduction of greenhouse gas reporting
8 that hadn't been done before. Some of it also to our
9 economic development goals so the M/WBE participation
10 rate and standing up a workforce training program.
11 Obviously, this connection to micro-distribution and
12 thinking about our City assets more holistically, as
13 Jennifer said from a sustainable transportation
14 perspective, is a part of the feedback that we have
15 heard as well, and so we really tried to be
16 thoughtful and strategic and thinking about the DMH
17 in particular, since that is the open one, but our
18 assets more generally, so that we're taking that
19 feedback into consideration.

20 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay. Thank you. Why
21 didn't the RFP mandate that only the eVTOLs be
22 allowed for tourist flights as soon as they are
23 approved for use by the FAA instead of us maybe
24 setting a goalpost?

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Yeah, I'll
3 hand it over to Anton to talk a little bit about the
4 permitting and jurisdictional process.

5 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes, thank you for
6 the question. It would be wonderful to see all tours
7 switch to eVTOL from day one. We recognize that won't
8 happen overnight, but that it will be a transition,
9 and we'd like to see a whole industry approach to
10 transitioning to that quieter and cleaner type of
11 technology. We've also required incentive plans from
12 each of the respondents for the RFP to demonstrate to
13 us how they are transactionally incentivizing the
14 accelerated rollout of electric vertical takeoff and
15 landing aircraft, and that is part of the evaluation
16 criteria of the RFP so it's something we take very
17 seriously and are doing everything we can to drive
18 that as quickly as possible.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, and when will
20 the EDC make a selection for the operator at DMH
21 again?

22 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yeah, so we're in
23 active procurement right now so it'll be by this
24 fall.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Fall. Okay, I just
3 wanted to, before I get into some, actually I'll
4 pause after a couple questions on your testimony and
5 let my Colleagues ask questions if they have any.

6 In your testimony, you stated the
7 heliports are also significant drivers of economic
8 activity providing a total economic impact of 78
9 million in the City. I want to get a better idea of
10 this breakdown of economic impact. I'm assuming this
11 is also including like the inclusion of tourism,
12 inclusion of film and TV. I know that is a huge
13 impact that gets put into this 78 million. I remember
14 very clearly because I was left totally shocked in my
15 oversight hearing last year that we have 1.2 to 2
16 million in revenue generated from the operators
17 itself so I want to get the difference between the 2
18 million and the 78 million economic impact and if we
19 have a better breakdown of that.

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Sure.
21 Council Member, the 2 million in annual revenue comes
22 to EDC, supports our programs and our ability to
23 deliver on EDC's mission programmatically. Whereas
24 the 78 million dollars in estimated economic impact,
25 that comes from our Economic and Research Group. The

2 breakdown at a high level is 50 million dollars of
3 direct economic impact resulting from the heliport
4 operators making purchases like fuel, for example, or
5 other supplies to support their operations, and then
6 20 million of indirect economic impact from spending
7 of their employees, for example, as workers in the
8 economy.

9 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Got it. Thank you,
10 and I see where that is here in terms of spending and
11 operations, but do we know how that gets broken down
12 into like City local investments and if people see
13 that, like I think initially what I've been trying to
14 do with looking at some of these issues is like where
15 are the measures that we take in whether it's from
16 revenue generation or from our City budget and say
17 how do we rectify and make investments locally
18 whether it's for the noise complaints or for the
19 environmental justice impacts that we see. Do we know
20 if there's any direct way that that estimation of
21 revenue gets put into communities locally?

22 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: I think
23 conceptually the spending that results from the
24 heliport activity would be realized through City tax
25 levy funds through tax revenue that then goes through

2 the general fund and then is probably dispersed by
3 OMB at a citywide level, rather than being locally
4 targeted.

5 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, so we need to
6 see more local remediation efforts in our City budget
7 specifically for this if it goes back into the
8 general fund.

9 Another part of your testimony I just
10 highlighted and wanted to see if we had a number for
11 these cases, you stated public use facilities operate
12 as the refueling stations for helicopters traversing
13 throughout the Northeast and tristate areas. How many
14 folks are actually having to stop for emergency or
15 utilize, do we know how many stops a day do we have
16 for refueling?

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: I think
18 we'll have to look through our data to see if we can
19 get to that level of granularity.

20 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you. Okay. Do
21 we have any, Lincoln just left, do you have
22 questions? Okay, I'll pass it over to Council Member
23 Bottcher for questions.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you,
25 Chair. Thank you.

2 Help us understand, what's your realistic
3 estimate, most optimistic, most pessimistic with
4 respect to the approval of electric air taxis,
5 electric helicopters. What can we really expect one
6 year, two year, three years, four years, five years?

7 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes, thank you for
8 the question. We share in that we want to see the
9 rollout of this technology and this really quiet
10 technology as soon as possible. From a technological
11 standpoint, we've seen that these aircraft can fly. I
12 think a number of people here in this room were
13 present at our demonstration flight in November at
14 the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, and we heard, or
15 rather we didn't hear, just how effective these
16 aircraft were in addressing quality-of-life issues so
17 we're very encouraged by that. Now in terms of
18 certification, that's up to the FAA. The companies
19 that we are engaged with in the industry and in our
20 conversations with the FAA, we're anticipating 2025
21 for that certification. Now, could it be '26
22 potentially for the commercial rollout? We recognize
23 that it may not happen exactly in '25 so that's what
24 we're aiming for, the '25, '26, and we're really
25 hoping and having conversations everywhere we can to

2 make sure we stick to that. We also have some
3 competitive dynamics when we look internationally so
4 I'll point out that in Paris for the Olympics, the
5 European equivalent of the FAA may be approving as
6 soon as this summer so we will have our eyes there to
7 see if that gets done and then it always adds a bit
8 of competitive dynamics. The Chinese have also
9 started with certification actually late last year.
10 We don't know exactly the standards they've been
11 using so I don't think that's the right comparison,
12 but it's encouraging to see that this is happening,
13 not just here in the U.S. but around the world and
14 put some pressure on our regulators as well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: So let's say in
16 January of next year, the FAA announces that we, the
17 FAA, have approved electric air taxis as a safe
18 flying technology in the United States. What then
19 happens here in New York City in the EDC heliports
20 for you to allow that technology, when would that be
21 happening in New York City?

22 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Right away.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: So they approve
24 it in January of next year, and we think that we

2 could see electric air taxis in the air late January
3 of next year?

4 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: We don't know about
5 the January date first of all. I will say that the
6 nice thing about being in New York and, particularly
7 because of these noise issues, this is the top market
8 for most of these companies. I personally worked at
9 one of these companies prior and the reason I'm in
10 this role is because New York kept on coming up at
11 the top of this list for the rollout of this
12 technology, and we see in the interest that a leading
13 European eVTOL company, a leading American move their
14 aircraft to our heliport to demonstrate that this is
15 a top priority for them so we're encouraged that
16 these companies that have these aircraft and
17 hopefully the customers of these aircraft as well,
18 depending on the business model, will put New York
19 first on that list. We'd like to beat Paris.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: And the charging
21 infrastructure, do we have currently in place at the
22 EDC heliports, do you have the charging
23 infrastructure in place that these companies would
24 require?

2 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Thank you for the
3 question. We recognize it's a bit of a chicken and
4 egg problem, and that's why we've made a policy
5 decision to put the infrastructure in right away so
6 what we've done through our procurement is we've made
7 it, not a nice to have, but a requirement for that
8 operator to make the necessary infrastructure
9 upgrades to support electric aircraft within 12
10 months of FAA certification and definitely within
11 that five-year term. So let's play it out, in the
12 very unfortunate event that the FAA doesn't certify
13 within five years, that operator will have already
14 invested that money in that infrastructure that may
15 not even be used, and that's something that we are
16 requiring of our operator.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: On the west
18 side, I represent the Manhattan Cruise Ship Terminal,
19 and we're working to provide shore power for the
20 cruise ships. That is going to be a multi-year
21 process because what we're waiting on is to hear from
22 Con Edison on whether or not a new electrical
23 substation will be needed to accommodate the charging
24 infrastructure. Do you know if at the heliports, if
25 Con Edison has made a determination about the need

2 for a new electrical substation, or does the current
3 power, would that accommodate the charging
4 infrastructure that you need?

5 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: That's a very good
6 point. Internally, we've done an analysis of the
7 existing substation capacity and are confident that
8 there is adequate capacity for a number of charging
9 stations at the heliport. We also are in
10 conversations with Con Ed across our portfolio to
11 make those necessary upgrades and to make sure that
12 the capacity is there. Thirdly, I will say that
13 working with the operator, we will go hand in hand
14 with Con Ed to make sure that that capacity is in
15 place. On timing, I will say as well, you mentioned
16 that it may take some time to build this out for
17 something like Manhattan Cruise, within the 12-month
18 time clock that we've set through our procurement is
19 for that infrastructure to be in place and
20 operational so for the operator of the Downtown
21 Manhattan Heliport, they need to make those
22 investments right away and start planning for that
23 right away. They're not waiting until certification
24 because they know this is an expectation that has to
25 be in place as soon as a certification hits.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: I now like to
4 recognize Council Member Vernikov for her questions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Thank you,
6 Chair.

7 Just a couple questions. I believe you
8 stated earlier there were about 50,000 noise
9 complaints from 3-1-1 calls. Is that correct?

10 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Can you just
12 specify how many of those are from essential service
13 flights like medical and emergency if you know?

14 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yeah, we can get
15 back to you on the exact numbers. I do know from
16 looking at the aircraft owners of these individual
17 complaints that the top two is a newsgathering
18 operator and the NYPD. Those are the essential ones.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: But you don't
20 know how many right now?

21 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: I have it somewhere
22 here.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Okay. Okay, yes,
24 that's good.

2 Do you happen to know what would be the
3 economic loss to specifically the tourism industry if
4 we ban non-essential helicopter flights?

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: No, Council
6 Member, we haven't looked at that specific analysis,
7 but that's something that we can work with our team
8 to see if we can respond to that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: So that would be
10 you guys, you guys would be the ones to make that
11 assessment?

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: We would
13 speak with our Economic and Research team to see if
14 they have the ability to make that kind of estimate
15 and analysis of economic loss.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Okay, great.
17 Thank you. That would be great, and then just one
18 more question. If you know, do you think that the
19 City Council is the appropriate venue to deal with
20 these issues?

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Thank you
22 for the question, Council Member. I think it sort of
23 ties back to the Chair's comment about the
24 legislation currently before the Committee. The Law
25 Department has been working closely reviewing this

2 legislation to really understand the jurisdictional
3 boundaries because aviation is such a complex
4 structure and so we obviously value the relationship
5 that we have with the Council in terms of addressing
6 quality-of-life issues, but for the actual legal
7 analysis of all of the different bills that are
8 before you today, we'd have to defer to the Law
9 Department.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Thank you very
11 much.

12 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you. As Chair
13 of the Committee on Economic Development that
14 oversees the EDC where all these heliports are
15 municipally our property, I'd like to say it is under
16 our jurisdiction to have oversight of this.

17 I'd now like to recognize Council Member
18 Brewer who also has questions.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
20 much. I've been working on this issue for about 25
21 years, and so I hope we get somewhere. It is a huge
22 challenge for New Yorkers to hear this noise. My
23 question around the Downtown Heliport is, maybe you
24 talked about this, I was teaching at Hunter today so
25 I'm late, I'm sorry. You have an RFP out, you have

2 three or four people who are responding. One of them
3 is more of a marine-type response. Is that something
4 that you could take seriously? I know you can't talk
5 about it, it's an RFP, you got to wait to see what
6 happens, but I'm just saying could you consider being
7 more out of the box thinking about that heliport so
8 it's not including those who are just using it to go
9 out to East Hampton or for tourism. Is that something
10 that is even in your thinking?

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Yeah. for
12 the question, Council Member. You are correct. We
13 can't speak specifically about responses that we have
14 received but, as you saw in the RFP that we put out,
15 we very much clarified and specified that we are
16 looking to integrate DMH into our broader marine
17 highway network, and so that was language that was in
18 the RFP itself. We talked a little bit about our
19 goals from a sustainable transportation perspective
20 and, as you saw at the event that we did last fall,
21 we had sort of demonstration project because we do
22 think it's critical that we think of all of these
23 assets from a variety of perspectives.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Maybe I know
25 too much, which is often a problem, but one of the

2 RFP responses is for marine more than aviation, and
3 the other two, I happen to know what they're saying,
4 is much more aviation. I'm just saying, please, EDC,
5 think outside the box when you respond to this thing.

6 Number two, the 34th Street Heliport.
7 That could be ended tomorrow if the City and the
8 State decide, they have to do it together, that you
9 don't want that heliport there. I will speak for the
10 Hudson River Park Trust. They would lose 1.7 million
11 dollars. They're fine to do that. Fine. No problem.
12 So what are you doing to work with the State to
13 either move it out into the river, I know it's
14 controversial with DEC, I know all of those issues,
15 but it's crazy to have, you obviously need maybe
16 police and you need press and you need emergency, I
17 got it, but you have a lot more going out of that so
18 what are you doing to think about changing and
19 reducing the traffic if not eliminating it from 34th
20 Street? All you have to do is say City and State,
21 we're changing.

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Yeah, so
23 Council Member, I really appreciate the question. As
24 you mentioned, we do not operate the heliport. The
25 Hudson River Park Trust...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Listen, I want to
3 be clear. If you say to the State, if Hochul and
4 Adams say we don't want it, they're done.

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I would say
6 we have regular conversations with the Hudson River
7 Park Trust and happy to continue talking with you and
8 them about the future of that site but, just from a
9 jurisdictional perspective, that is not a heliport
10 that we operate.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, but I'm
12 letting you know, with all due respect, that's a
13 little bit of a BS answer because the Hudson River
14 Park Trust will give it up tomorrow if you and the
15 State tell them to.

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I
17 understand, Council Member. Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, so are you
19 talking to the State about it also? The hell with the
20 folks at the Trust are willing to say goodbye. Are
21 you talking to the State?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I would
23 have to defer to Anton. I don't believe that we have
24 had a specific conversation with the State about
25 that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Could you have one
3 please? Could you promise to do that?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Yes, and we
5 can report back to you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you, and
7 then, finally, New Jersey. I went to New Jersey. I
8 flew in a plane. I went right over Central Park and
9 Brooklyn Bridge Park and Governors Island and the
10 doors off and so on and so forth. What are you doing
11 with the feds to advocate for the bill because it
12 ain't going to happen by itself without the federal
13 government. New Jersey makes lots of money, I've been
14 out there, I tried to stop it, local Council Member
15 tried to stop it. It's not happening if the feds
16 don't help us. What are you doing to help us with the
17 federal government, FAA.

18 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Thank you, Council
19 Member. We're part of a working group with the FAA
20 and representatives of the helicopter industry
21 including from the New Jersey side and officials from
22 New Jersey DOT, EDA and are initiating those
23 discussions to how do we look at this more
24 holistically and across the region. We don't have the
25 same leverage as we do over heliport operators in New

2 Jersey. As you know, the helicopter tours that leave
3 from Manhattan all follow over white water routes.
4 We'd like to see similar.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I negotiated that.
6 I'm aware of it.

7 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes. Thank you for
8 that, and so we'd like to see as close in adherence
9 to those routes as possible, working in collaboration
10 with New Jersey stakeholders, recognizing that our
11 powers are limited here. We can influence and..

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know my time is
13 up. I have two resolutions that say support the
14 federal, Nadler and other acts that say shut it down.
15 Is that something that you support, federal
16 legislation to shut down tourism over Manhattan or
17 anyplace else, but particularly over the five
18 boroughs. That's what I'm talking about.

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Yeah, thank
20 you, Council Member. I would say in terms of
21 reviewing the resolution, I have the same response
22 about the legislation in that we need to review all
23 of them holistically, and we're working closely with
24 the Law Department on that so I'm not yet ready to
25 comment on our response.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's the only
3 way to close New Jersey. There is no other way. Thank
4 you.

5 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Thank you, Council
6 Member.

7 I'd like to recognize Council Member
8 Restler.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you. I just
10 want to take a second to again, thank you, Chair, for
11 leading this hearing and being such a strong voice on
12 this issue, and I also want to thank my Colleague
13 from the Upper West Side, who has been a strong
14 leader on this issue for a very long time, and we
15 have many elected officials in New York City, like
16 Congressman Nadler, Congressman Velázquez, many
17 others who have been fighting hard to rein in the
18 helicopter industry, but none have fought harder than
19 Gail Brewer, and so just credit to Gail for all the
20 work that she's done for a very long time on this.

21 Sir, you mentioned international
22 competition and that we're looking at other global
23 cities and how they're looking at electric
24 helicopters, but also I hope how they're reining in
25 the helicopter industry. Are you aware that Paris

2 does not allow non-essential tourist helicopter
3 flights over their city?

4 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yes, I'm aware.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay, and yet no
6 consideration of a similar policy is in place in New
7 York.

8 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: That's a federal
9 decision so the FAA controls the airspace, so that is
10 not up to us.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But we do control
12 our own helipads and what happens at New York City
13 helipads. Is any decision being considered to end
14 non-essential tourism helicopter flights at New York
15 City Economic Development Corporation-owned helipads?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Yeah, thank
17 you for the question, Council Member. In the same
18 vein of how we are reviewing the legislation that
19 you've introduced, that is a conversation that is
20 ongoing with the Law Department so if the question is
21 are you considering it, I would say yes within the
22 context of our review of your legislation.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I have to say I
24 don't recall when Chair Farías notified the Economic
25

2 Development Corporation of this hearing. Do you know
3 the date that you were made aware of this hearing?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I think it
5 was about three weeks ago.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Three weeks ago,
7 and the bills that are being considered today, almost
8 all of them had been introduced months, if not years
9 ago. Is that correct?

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: That's
11 correct. Some are 2022 for some of them.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And the
13 expectation, you've worked in governmental affairs
14 for a long time, the expectation of agencies is to
15 come prepared to testify on the bills at the hearings
16 at which you attend. Is that correct?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So to have no
19 comment whatsoever on half a dozen pieces of
20 legislation, is that correct? You can understand how
21 that is frustrating to the Members of the City
22 Council.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I absolutely
24 understand the frustration. I would just ask you to
25 keep in mind a couple of different things. One, from

2 a legislative perspective and a legal perspective, we
3 do rely on the Law Department and their level of
4 expertise, particularly when it comes to the
5 complexity around federal airspace, aviation
6 jurisdiction, and so on, and so it is not a legal
7 review that lies within EDC only. We do work with our
8 colleagues at the Law Department who I know also work
9 with Council Legal on review as well and so, while I
10 can't speak on behalf of the Law Department, I can
11 say that they are earnestly reviewing the legislation
12 from that lens.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: If they were
14 earnestly reviewing the legislation, then we would
15 have answers at the hearing today. If this
16 Administration was taking the City Council seriously,
17 we would have answers today. I mean City Hall is
18 sitting here. It's disrespectful. It's disrespectful
19 for your agencies to show up here unprepared to
20 answer our questions and to respond substantively on
21 the legislation that we introduced. We put an
22 enormous amount of effort into these bills and to
23 crafting them thoughtfully, carefully, deliberately
24 with our lawyers, making sure that they are in fact
25 legal and appropriate and, to not get responses, it

2 really undermines our ability to do our jobs, and
3 it's really disappointing.

4 CHAMBERS: (APPLAUSE)

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: No, you're not
6 allowed to, you're not, please, do like that instead.
7 I'm sorry.

8 I'm sorry to get worked up, but it's
9 disappointing and it's frustrating and it really does
10 undermine what we're trying to accomplish in these
11 hearings.

12 I'll move on to other questions. As you
13 shared in your in response to earlier questioning, we
14 saw the number of complaints double from 2023 to 2024
15 around helicopter noise in New York City. What did
16 EDC do in response to doubling of complaints, nearly
17 60,000 complaints, to try to lessen negative impacts
18 in our communities?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Yeah, thank
20 you for the question, Council Member. I think in
21 terms of where our leverages and where we have
22 regulatory authority, we really see that in our
23 concession agreements and the management of the
24 heliports and so, as we described in our testimony
25 and in response to the Council Members' questions,

2 the things that we have added into our RFP for the
3 new operator speak directly to what we are doing to
4 further address these concerns so reduction of tour
5 hours by 30 percent. That is something that we have
6 the ability to do within this agreement that is
7 separate from the FAA jurisdiction over airspace.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And to that,
9 what's the current number of flights that are
10 permitted under the current agreement?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I'm going
12 to differ to Anton for the specifics.

13 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yeah, we have a
14 flight cap at the downtown Manhattan heliport of
15 30,000...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: 30,000 and then
17 the new RFP allows for?

18 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: It's the same flight
19 count.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Same, so despite
21 the 30 percent reduction in hours, we're talking
22 about the same number of helicopter flights that
23 communities are going to be burdened by as a result
24 of the new RFP?

2 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Not necessarily. We
3 don't want to create a situation where we're
4 concentrating all that they should be reaching that
5 flight cap still within the hours. They should be
6 operating safely within those hours.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I hope that
8 everything's operating safely, but I just mean facts,
9 numbers, it's the same number of flights from the old
10 RFP to the new RFP. Is that right?

11 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: That's correct, yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay, so I just,
13 for me, that's really disappointing because we've
14 seen complaints skyrocket, and yet we're not doing
15 anything to actually rein in the number of flights..

16 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: I'd like to point
17 out that 1 percent of all complaints are tours from
18 the Downtown Manhattan Heliport so..

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: To that point, I
20 have to say, I'll give you an example. We recently
21 had two complaints that came in to 3-1-1 then they
22 called our office. We followed up with EDC because
23 the complaints were dismissed as non-tourist flights.
24 We sent in images, we sent in the course of the

2 flights and, of course, EDC then confirmed, yes,
3 these were tourist flights so nobody's perfect.

4 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: I know.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: And everybody
6 makes mistakes. I only get so many times that
7 constituents follow up with the 3-1-1 numbers that we
8 can follow up and say, hey, this is what's real, but
9 when you say it's 1 percent and I say I've got
10 anecdotally two complaints from recent weeks from
11 constituents that were dismissed as non-tourist
12 flights but were in fact confirmed subsequently by
13 EDC as tourist flights, I don't really know what to
14 believe. I can tell you that when I sit in Brooklyn
15 Bridge Park, in my community, and the helicopters are
16 idling up above, that's not Blade, that's not
17 somebody going to JFK or the Hamptons. They want to
18 see the park. They could see it perfectly well from
19 the ground, but they choose to watch it from up
20 above. I know some of those flights are coming from
21 New Jersey, but a lot of those are tourist flights
22 that are coming from our helipads and that we
23 control, and I get that there's state and federal
24 regulations here, especially federal, but we control

2 our helipads. Is it not within our power to regulate
3 what happens at our helipads?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I think,
5 Council Member, I will refer back to the improvements
6 on the flight tracking system that we have laid out
7 for the RFP because I definitely see the point, and
8 it's our teams that are following up when there is a
9 discrepancy and so we know that there's improvement
10 on the data collection that needs to happen and on
11 the transparency side, and that's the very reason why
12 we have baked that into that RFP.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I have additional
14 questions but, perhaps if there's time for more, I
15 can come back later. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much.
17 Just really quickly, in the RFP that's listed that we
18 have submissions on, is there a listed leasing fee
19 for the operators? Is there a description of how much
20 the operators would have to pay to utilize and lease
21 out of usage from the heliports?

22 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Yeah, so it's the
23 concession that we're running through a competitive
24 procurement so, as one of multiple evaluation
25 criteria, it is a fee offer, and it's up to the

2 market to come up with the most competitive fee offer
3 to generate the most revenue to the City but, again,
4 that's just one evaluation criteria that we're
5 balancing along with operational experience and
6 quality-of-life concerns as well.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, great. I'd like
8 to see our revenue directly generated from at least
9 these agreements that we have to be higher than what
10 we're getting so please keep me in the loop of what
11 that turns out to be with the RFP.

12 Heliports emit more than 40 times the
13 carbon than passenger cars. Does EDC see a conflict
14 between the City's overall air quality goals that
15 we've set with allowing the heliports to be used for
16 non-essential purposes like air tours?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I think,
18 Council Member, we see the management of all of our
19 assets very holistically, right, so we were in front
20 of you a couple of months ago talking about shore
21 power with the cruise terminals. Jennifer and her
22 team have been working very closely with DOT on
23 marine highway. We work closely with Mayor's Office
24 of Climate and Environmental Justice on, not just
25 environmental justice communities, but air quality

2 programming and, of course, our colleagues from DEP
3 are with us today so I wouldn't say that we think of
4 any one of our particular program areas separate and
5 apart from the rest. We try to think about
6 sustainable transportation within the City's overall
7 goals and, as EDC being responsible for things like
8 the Green Economy Action Plan and looking at the
9 future of green jobs and other like really critical
10 elements to not just the green economy but our
11 overall public health and environmental goals, we try
12 to take an integrated approach as we look across the
13 board.

14 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, thank you.

15 I'm going to give EDC a little bit of a
16 break and pull in DEP folks. Hi, folks. What's the
17 City's current protocol for responding to and
18 investigating helicopter noise?

19 DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: Good morning. Thank
20 you for the question. DEP does not receive the 3-1-1
21 noise complaints for helicopters so we do not respond
22 to those.

23 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Does DEP currently
24 have the capability to monitor and report on
25 helicopter noise levels in the city?

2 DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: No, as far as we
3 know, the technology to do so does not really exist,
4 and so we do not have that capability to track and
5 monitor helicopter noise.

6 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And do you folks have
7 an idea of what resources would be needed to
8 implement the requirements of my bill, Intro. 27?

9 DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: We don't because,
10 like I said, as far as we know, the technology
11 required by the bill does not exist but, if it were
12 to be developed in the future, it would certainly be
13 very expensive, in the millions, to install,
14 maintain, and then store all the data required by the
15 bill.

16 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Do you folks monitor
17 any other decibel meters throughout the city?

18 DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: We have a decibel
19 meter program to respond to muffler noise on a few
20 roadways throughout the city.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: How many roadways do
22 we have decibel meters for?

23 DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: We currently have 10
24 of the noise meter cameras for muffler sound.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, and are those
3 all based in one borough or throughout the five
4 boroughs?

5 DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: They're throughout
6 all five boroughs.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: They're in four
8 boroughs currently.

9 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: In four boroughs, so
10 we have 10 decibel meters amongst four boroughs. Do
11 we know how much that costs us to run?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: Those meters
13 individually are around 35,000 dollars and then
14 associated staff.

15 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And how do we
16 regulate that data or analyze that data?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: The cameras are
18 triggered by a sound level of 85 decibels and, when
19 that sound level is hit, it takes about a 20 second
20 video and that video is stored.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: All other
23 recordings are not stored. It has a finite amount of
24 data.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And is there a
3 violation associated?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: Correct. There's
5 a summons if we're able to determine the source of
6 that noise and identify the license plate number of
7 the vehicle.

8 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Sure.

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: We issue a
10 summons.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Do you know off the
12 top of your brain how much the summons is?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: 800 dollars for
14 the first offense.

15 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: First offense, 800.
16 Okay, and just for the sake of me right now, because
17 math was never my strong suit so that's like 350,000
18 to at least run this program with just the meters
19 each, not associated with administration and staff or
20 whoever else has to write in the system itself. Okay.
21 I look forward to this...

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: I'll just add in
23 though that the summonses go into the general fund.

24 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And the summons is
25 going to the general fund.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: (INAUDIBLE) paid
3 into the general fund.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Got it. I appreciate
5 that. That gives me a really good idea in the
6 positive response that I should probably receive from
7 the Admin on this plan because we do something
8 similar already, we already issue summonses.
9 Apparently, there's a video technology, which is
10 great, because that could help us with what's above,
11 and it does not seem too costly to me in comparison
12 to a 107-billion-dollar budget.

13 DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: Sorry, Council
14 Member, if I could just jump in to clarify that the
15 program for the muffler noise is very different than
16 what we think the bill envisions.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Sure. I wouldn't know
18 because I don't have a response yet.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAGE: Sure. Well, we
20 can speak about from the operational side of this
21 bill that we do not support it because, first, as I
22 said, we don't think this technology exists, as far
23 as we know it does not exist, and then, then if it
24 were to be developed in the future, of course, it
25 would be extremely costly to install an unknown

2 amount of meters at a cost that we don't know because
3 it doesn't exist yet to maintain them, to staff a
4 program to monitor them and then, of course, all of
5 the data that's required, which is an extraordinary
6 amount of data and, like Director Page mentioned, we
7 don't store constant data with our muffler program,
8 right? We only store the snippets of when we believe
9 there is a violation. The bill calls for constant
10 data to be kept, I think every five seconds for an
11 unknown amount of time, so that the storage even
12 itself would be extremely expensive and, because DEP
13 does not have enforcement authority over this noise,
14 we wouldn't be able to do anything with this
15 extremely expensive data that we've been gathering,
16 and so we think it's much more valuable to allocate
17 our resources in areas where we can do enforcement
18 and can really make an immediate difference in the
19 quality of life and the health of our neighbors.

20 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: I look forward to
21 getting a full response on the bill and the
22 recommendations on amendments to my bill that would
23 better work for the agency itself and the City of New
24 York.

25 DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN: Absolutely.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Ultimately, you folks
3 as an agency do oversee noise complaints and, with
4 the mass amounts, from what we see from year to year,
5 double the amounts of noise complaints we are
6 receiving, maybe the City has to think a bit more
7 constructively and innovatingly on what we do with
8 our City-owned property and how we actually take
9 aggregated data from 3-1-1 and associate it
10 appropriately to violations throughout the city to
11 make sure we have good actors in our communities.

12 Okay, with that, I'll end there because
13 these other questions that I have for you folks, we
14 don't have a response on the bill so it doesn't seem
15 like I can ask them right now, but I will follow up
16 with them so we can have a better thorough response.

17 I'd like to also acknowledge Council
18 Member Salamanca, and I'd like to call Council Member
19 Brewer for second round questions followed by
20 Restler.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Very quickly, and
22 maybe you said this, but what is the timing on the
23 RFP that's for the Downtown?

24

25

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: Our goal,
3 Council Member, is to select an operator by this
4 fall.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: By this fall. I do
6 appreciate coming to the electric helicopter event.
7 What's the timing on an electric helicopter? I assume
8 it's not by the fall.

9 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Not by the fall,
10 unfortunately, but we are anticipating FAA
11 certification as soon as 2025.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: 2025 so, the RFP
13 could talk about electric but it wouldn't be able to
14 implement until 2025. Is that what you're saying?

15 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: It talks about
16 electric and we're requiring our operator to start
17 making investments right away in anticipation of FAA
18 certification.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: But electrics
20 wouldn't be operating until 2025 ostensibly.

21 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: As much as we'd like
22 that to be the case...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

24 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: The aircraft have to
25 be certified by the FAA first.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, and is it
3 possible to have, looking at the RFPs again, where
4 it's not implementing any helicopters that are doing
5 what I would consider tourism or non-essential tasks,
6 is that something that is part of that discussion
7 with the RFP?

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: So the RFP
9 takes the approach recognizing that EDC has the
10 ability through our concession agreements to try to,
11 through policy moves, further restrict tour flights
12 at DMH, and so that's the requirement then of
13 reducing the tour operating hours by 30 percent.
14 That's an effort to be further responsive to quality-
15 of-life concerns.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: How does that
17 impact that 30,000 flight number?

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: It doesn't.
19 I acknowledge that we're not changing the overall
20 annual flight cap. That still remains at 30,000, but
21 still we're trying to, through operations, reduce the
22 number of tour flights and how often they're in the
23 skies.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, just so I
25 understand, what is the purpose of having these tour

2 flights? Is it because you're afraid? I know de
3 Blasio used to tell me, I tried with Bloomberg, he
4 had a helicopter and he was a pilot so I gave up, and
5 then I tried with de Blasio and he told me that if we
6 didn't have them in New York, meaning tourism and
7 non-essential, everybody would go to New Jersey.
8 They're already in New Jersey so we have to work on
9 the federal to get rid of New Jersey, but it does
10 seem to me that we shouldn't be, I don't understand
11 the economic model, particularly if you have a new
12 RFP that is giving you the kind of income you want,
13 why you have to include the tourism and the non-
14 essential? What is the economic input for that?

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: So a
16 rationale from an economic perspective is that as
17 excited as we are about eVTOL technology, it is still
18 relatively new, and so it might be perceived as risky
19 if we were to require eVTOL only out of these
20 operations and so, recognizing that there might need
21 to be a transition from conventional helicopters to
22 fully electric helicopters, maintaining some amount
23 of tour flights, for example, allows that transition
24 from a revenue perspective, meaning you maintain some
25 revenue from traditional helicopters to then support

2 incentives that then encourage the faster adoption of
3 eVTOLs.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: You're just making
5 New Yorkers crazy with this, and it's not everybody
6 and so I'm just suggesting that you really reconsider
7 the tourism, non-essential, even if there's a period
8 that you have to with fossil fuel still being the
9 main attraction or the main driver, and I'm not even
10 clear with the electric if they're completely quiet.
11 It seemed like they were, but I am not convinced.
12 Please reconsider this. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you, Council
14 Member.

15 I'd now like to recognize that we've been
16 joined by Council Member Gutiérrez and call on
17 Council Member Restler for his additional questions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
19 much, Chair, and I do want to say I think there were
20 some good things in the new RFP. I know that you all
21 are good professionals and you're trying, but the
22 policy of the Administration is to prioritize the
23 needs of the top .001 percent of New Yorkers who use
24 these helicopters over the needs of people in our

2 neighborhoods and communities, and ultimately that
3 decision is made at City Hall and the Mayor is wrong.

4 I do want to just dig in on a few
5 specific things. The implication of what you said,
6 even though you haven't responded to any of our bills
7 today, is that a reduction in these flights would be
8 detrimental to the economy and move these flights to
9 New Jersey. Do you think that extremely wealthy
10 people who are taking flights to JFK or the Hamptons
11 would travel from Lower Manhattan to New Jersey to
12 get on helicopters?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: I think,
14 Council Member, the point that we tried to make in
15 terms of industry moving to other locations is less
16 about the personal or individual choices of a person
17 or a company and more about what are the
18 opportunities. Let's just say for our flights in
19 particular, that we do have the ability to control
20 from...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Excuse me, but my
22 question was do you think that very wealthy
23 individuals who go to the Hamptons or JFK that
24 represent a significant amount of the helicopter
25 travel that we all are burdened by in our

2 communities, those people who are just doing it for
3 time, right, they're too rich and important and fancy
4 to take cars or public transit like the rest of us.
5 Do you think they would take the time to go to New
6 Jersey to get on a helicopter to go to the Hamptons
7 or JFK?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: Council
9 Member, I really cannot speak to what a hypothetical
10 person may or may not do.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I just mean to
12 say it would definitely take them more time. They
13 wouldn't do it. It would eliminate that helicopter
14 travel. That would be to the benefit of our
15 communities, and some percentage of the tourists
16 would choose not to go to New Jersey. Some would,
17 some wouldn't but, ultimately, it would lead to a
18 reduction in the total amount of helicopter activity
19 that we are burdened by in our neighborhoods, and
20 that would make it a positive thing. We have no idea
21 what EDC, I mean we know what EDC's policy is on our
22 bills, we didn't hear it today unfortunately because
23 we didn't get a response in your testimony, but it
24 would inevitably help our neighborhoods to eliminate
25 the non-essential tourism travel so the idea that all

2 of it is just going to move to New Jersey is not
3 true.

4 I'd like to also ask about noise. Could
5 you just clarify what studies have taken place to
6 evaluate the noise impacts in places where we see
7 chronic, intense helicopter noise like Brooklyn
8 Bridge Park?

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: I would
10 defer back to what our colleagues at DEP said in
11 terms of us not being aware of any specific studies
12 on the ground in a place like Brooklyn Bridge Park
13 that is able to assess and quantify helicopter
14 traffic, looking to my colleagues in case I'm mis-
15 stating that, but...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I would strongly
17 encourage you to consider it because we all have seen
18 the research about the long-term health impacts that
19 noise can have on people sleep, on their anxiety
20 levels, on cardiovascular issues. There's a
21 relatively small number of areas in New York City
22 that are experiencing the intense burden of this
23 helicopter activity. I was going to actually read you
24 just one of the testimonies from one of my
25 constituents who's submitting it today. Suffice it to

2 say that the massive disturbances to my sleep,
3 sanity, and overall quality of life have pushed me
4 beyond my human limits. This, on top of the blatant
5 disregard for our suffering environment by climate
6 crisis joy-riders, is why I support the legislation
7 being considered today.

8 I hear this from thousands of my
9 constituents. You're nodding because it's real. This
10 is in my District, it's not every District in New
11 York City, but in my District thousands of people are
12 negatively impacted every day, but we can't say that
13 we've studied and looked at what are the actual
14 impacts of the noise in these communities so I really
15 hope the DEP and EDC will undertake the necessary
16 studies and analysis to see what kind of horrible
17 impact this permitted industry is having, and then I
18 also just wanted to ask you about jobs. Remind me,
19 again, how many jobs are associated with the two
20 helipads in New York City?

21 CHAMBERS: 125.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I know the
23 number. I was asking them for the record.

24

25

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT ADGATE: There is an
3 estimated total of 175 jobs.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: I just want to
5 reiterate, again, the public has to be silent. Thank
6 you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But I appreciate
8 the knowledgeable folks in the audience. You must be
9 in one of the neighborhoods. So 173, 175 jobs. Have
10 you done any analysis that if these helipads were
11 limited to essential activity, how many jobs would
12 potentially be lost?

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: We haven't
14 looked at that incremental difference.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay. I
16 appreciate there is a potential path in downtown to
17 go to electric which would have significant
18 environmental and noise benefits in all communities,
19 but I strongly want to encourage the Mayor and EDC to
20 reconsider the continuation of non-essential
21 helicopter travel until the electric helicopters are
22 permitted, and I know we're not getting any answers
23 on anything today but I really hope that that policy
24 will be seriously considered. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much,
3 Council Member.

4 Just some last bit of finance-related
5 questions. How much revenue, according to EDC
6 records, comes directly to New York City each year
7 based on its agreements with tour operators that use
8 NYC heliports? Is it still the amount from my
9 oversight hearing or has it increased, decreased?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: It's 2
11 million to the two City-owned heliports total each
12 year. I don't think we have the breakdown of that 2
13 million, how much of it originates from the tours
14 versus other types of flights.

15 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, great, and how
16 much does it cost New York City, as estimated by EDC,
17 to maintain the heliports each year?

18 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: The maintenance of
19 the heliports is covered by the operators so they
20 receive the revenues from the various uses, like
21 tours, and in the case of the Downtown Manhattan
22 Heliport, it's over 90 percent to your earlier
23 questions. It's primarily the tours that are then
24 supporting the upkeep of the facility, and then the
25 revenues, there's a revenue share agreement that then

2 passes those revenues down to the City, and this is
3 what we're hoping to, as you mentioned earlier
4 increase while still diversifying the revenue uses at
5 that heliport.

6 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, thank you, and
7 can EDC disclose any annual operating capital
8 expenditures related to managing the two heliports to
9 the Committee?

10 DIRECTOR FREDRIKSON: Again, the
11 maintenance for the facilities are covered by the
12 operator. This is why the structure works, preserves
13 dollars from the City's standpoint for these
14 facilities.

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: I'll add,
16 Council Member, we don't have the data today, but
17 we'll look to see if we have that and share that with
18 the Council.

19 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, great. Thank
20 you, and just my last question, when the 2016
21 agreement reduced tourist flights by half out of the
22 New York City heliports, did that lower revenue have
23 any material impacts on our budget or on EDC's budget
24 or New York City finances?

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT SUN: We'd also
3 have to again look at what fiscal impact that might
4 have had on our programs, if any.

5 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: I'd appreciate
6 looking at those numbers so we can get a better idea,
7 especially now with the new RFP you're doing 30
8 percent less or requesting that at least.

9 I don't have any other Council Members
10 signed up for questions so this panel is now
11 dismissed.

12 Okay, as EDC and DEP folks are
13 transitioning out, I would like to call up
14 representatives from Borough President Reynoso's and
15 Levine's office, Lacey Tauber, and a representative
16 from Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez's office, Daniel
17 Wiley, to the panel.

18 I'll call Lacey and Daniel one more time.
19 It's like Price is Right, come on down.

20 You folks can begin when you're ready,
21 okay?

22 DANIEL WILEY: All right. Thank you,
23 Majority Leader and Council Members. I'm from
24 Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez's office, and I'll
25 read a brief statement from her.

2 Over the years, I've come to the
3 inescapable conclusion that unnecessary helicopter
4 traffic is simply a poor fit for New York City, one
5 of the most densely populated metropolitan areas.
6 There have been too many helicopter crashes in New
7 York City. Think of this, right now, no one, not the
8 FAA, not anyone else, is actually regulating
9 helicopter traffic above New York City. There's no
10 minimum altitude, there's no radar tracking of the
11 aircraft. It is essentially the wild, wild west of
12 urban airspace. Not only is this about safety, but
13 it's also about the quality of life for many of us,
14 especially my neighbors living on the waterfront and
15 along commuter routes. Helicopter noise is a
16 persistent problem. The sound echoes. These flights
17 generate an amount of noise that greatly reduces the
18 quality of life for many New Yorkers. This includes
19 those in my District from Queens to Brooklyn. The
20 helicopters crowd the skies to a dangerous level as
21 we've seen in result in multiple tragic accidents
22 over the years. In Congress, we've brought renewed
23 efforts to address this issue for the sake of all who
24 call our great city home. That is why I am an
25 original co-sponsor of HR-7753, Protecting

2 Communities from Helicopter Noise Act. I support
3 local efforts to restrict non-essential helicopter
4 traffic, and I'm proud to support the bill before the
5 City Council to halt non-essential helicopter flights
6 at the two City-owned heliports and eliminate tens of
7 thousands of unnecessary flights. I support this and
8 other bills to protect our community and restore the
9 quality of life and reduce noise pollution. Enough is
10 enough. My colleagues and I, together, will continue
11 to fight for the day when the safety and quality of
12 life for New Yorkers will not be put at risk for the
13 sake of profit. Thank you.

14 LACEY TAUBER: Good afternoon, Chair
15 Farías and Members of the Committee. I'm here today
16 on behalf of Brooklyn Borough President Antonio
17 Reynoso and Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
18 to again express their commitment to ridding our
19 city's skies of non-essential helicopter travel.
20 Helicopters are simply not necessary for either
21 tourism or commuting, and their outsized impacts on
22 noise and air pollution far outweigh any
23 entertainment or convenience they may provide. Even
24 according to the helicopter industry, the noise that
25 they generate flying at 500 or even 1,000 feet over

2 the city is well within the range considered
3 dangerous by the Hearing Health Foundation. With
4 thousands of non-essential helicopter trips around
5 NYC every week, it's no wonder that noise complaints
6 have risen more than 2,000 percent in the last five
7 years, and we just heard doubled in the last year.
8 The noise is disruptive to residents who live along
9 the flight paths, Manhattan and Brooklyn's
10 waterfronts, North and Central Brooklyn along the JFK
11 routes, and the constant exposure can cause health
12 impacts such as stress and anxiety in addition to
13 quality-of-life issues. We appreciate the changes the
14 City has already implemented on the tourism industry
15 such as reducing the number of tourist flights,
16 restricting flight patterns over the waterways, and
17 exploring new technologies. However, the presence of
18 tourist helicopters along our waterfronts is
19 extremely disruptive. Among other issues, the noise
20 negatively impacts the experience for residents and
21 tourists enjoying relaxation in our city's open
22 spaces, especially Riverside Park, Hudson River Park,
23 Battery Park, and Brooklyn Bridge Park where the
24 noise is constant. New Yorkers have invested billions
25 of dollars into supporting and improving these parks,

2 only to have their enjoyment of them diminished. Yet
3 noise pollution is not the only issue, so efforts to
4 curb it only address part of the problem. Commuter
5 helicopters use approximately 20 times more fuel per
6 hour than the average car, depending on the model.
7 With thousands of non-essential trips every day, the
8 industry is a major source of air pollution and runs
9 counter to our City's stated goal of reducing
10 greenhouse gas emissions. We're aware that the issue
11 requires a regional solution. The Borough Presidents
12 have joined with their federal colleagues to call on
13 the FAA to ban non-essential helicopter travel from
14 NYC's airspace, and they support Council Member
15 Brewer's resolution. This would address the concerns
16 that this would just push traffic to New Jersey. In
17 the meantime, we must work with the tools at our
18 disposal. Both Borough Presidents support Council
19 Member Restler's Intro., which would ban non-
20 essential helicopters operating at City heliports.
21 Notably, the concession license agreements that allow
22 helicopter operators to use the City's heliports do
23 not require a cause for termination. Yet despite
24 repeated calls for EDC to ban non-essential
25 helicopter flights, they instead renewed their

2 agreement with the downtown Manhattan operator last
3 year. In conclusion, both Borough Presidents don't
4 believe their constituents should have to suffer from
5 noise or air pollution for another day just so
6 tourists can view the city from above or commuters
7 can pay exorbitant sums to get to the Hamptons faster
8 until such time as the helicopter industry can
9 sufficiently demonstrate that it can operate in a way
10 that does not disrupt residents' quality of life,
11 does not pose a threat to public health, and does not
12 use fossil fuels that result in carbon emissions.
13 Both Borough Presidents support a ban of non-
14 essential flights from our City's heliports. Thank
15 you so much and thank you for the grace with time.
16 They look forward to working with the Council.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Just remind them I
18 gave them more time.

19 Thank you. Thank you both. Do we have any
20 questions? Council Member Restler?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Just a comment. I
22 don't think Borough President Levine's office has
23 ever sounded as good as they do today, and just a
24 question for Dan, is there anything we can do to
25 support federal advocacy efforts and the

2 Congresswoman's leadership around regulating
3 helicopters in New York City?

4 DANIEL WILEY: I think what we've
5 introduced is trying to get the FAA more involved.
6 There's an issue with under 1,500 feet or 1,200 feet,
7 radar doesn't really cover because we have towers.
8 That's why it's not a good fit for New York City.
9 We've been calling on FAA to do more to analyze the
10 problem and be a partner and obviously the largest
11 solution is going to have to come from both states
12 and be a federal solution because, obviously,
13 helicopters can find another route in, but we have to
14 address this locally here, too, so I think what
15 everyone is doing, we've got to keep doing it and
16 keep the pressure up.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you both, and I
18 would love to continue the conversation around each
19 of the bills and Resos that we have here at the
20 hearing today.

21 I now open the hearing for public
22 testimony.

23 I remind members of the public that this
24 is a formal government proceeding and that decorum

2 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of
3 the public shall remain silent at all times.

4 The witness table is reserved for people
5 who wish to testify. No video recording or
6 photography is allowed from the witness table.

7 Further, members of the public may not present audio
8 or video recordings as testimony but may submit
9 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant-at-
10 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

11 If you wish to speak at today's hearing
12 and you have not done so already, please fill out an
13 appearance card with the Sergeant-at-Arms and wait to
14 be recognized. When recognized and in the interest of
15 the over 100 people we have signed up today, folks
16 will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing
17 topic, Helicopter Noise and Safety.

18 If you have a written statement or
19 additional written testimony you wish to submit for
20 the record, please provide a copy of that testimony
21 to the Sergeant-at-Arms. You may also email written
22 testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72
23 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings
24 will not be accepted.

2 I will call the first panel, Lydon
3 Sleeper, Sam Goldstein, Brittany Davies, Stacey
4 Sheard, Josh Rousseau.

5 JOSH ROUSSEAU: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Please state your
7 name for the record.

8 JOSH ROUSSEAU: Thank you, Chair. I've
9 been volunteered to go first so thank you again. My
10 name is Josh Rousseau. I'm the Northeast U.S.
11 Regional Representative for Vertical Aviation
12 International, VAI.

13 VAI is the world's leading membership
14 association dedicated to the industry. We represent
15 more than 1,000 companies, over 16,000 industry
16 professionals in more than 65 countries. I think the
17 importance and the critical importance of the
18 heliport system in New York City has been well-
19 documented, so I will, in the interest of time, spare
20 going into any of that. I do think the critical piece
21 here with some of my friends from Stop the Chop in
22 the room is to understand that we understand that
23 sound signatures are a common source of concern
24 associated with helicopters and the facilities they
25 use, which is why one of VAI's top priorities is

2 community compatibility, being good neighbors. We are
3 constantly engaged with our members, community
4 groups, and industry partners in an ongoing dialogue
5 intended to forge positive relationships that produce
6 meaningful results for all stakeholders involved.

7 This collaboration continues to create sound
8 mitigation efforts and innovative solutions to fly
9 neighborly. Additionally, our industry is developing
10 innovative technologies such as Advanced Air
11 Mobility, AAM, and eVTOLs, which were referenced
12 earlier, to improve community compatibility and
13 environmental sustainability. VAI wholeheartedly
14 supports the efforts of Mayor Adams and EDC's
15 prioritization of initial steps to realize a new
16 vision for the first-of-its-kind hub for sustainable
17 transportation. However, to be clear, this technology
18 is still in development. It is not yet a reality. The
19 economic impacts of enacting legislation to ban non-
20 essential helicopters are beyond significant as the
21 general aviation industry holds a vital position in
22 shaping both national and state economies. In New
23 York alone, it supports a workforce of over 43,000
24 individuals and generates significant total economic
25 output. The general aviation industry is vital for

2 supporting key sectors in the New York City and state
3 economies, including emergency services, law
4 enforcement, utility work, transportation, tourism,
5 and business aviation. I will be very quick. Whether
6 it be City Council bills being discussed in this
7 hearing or legislation currently pending before the
8 New York State Legislature, VAI has serious concerns
9 about the legality of any effort to regulate aviation
10 operations. Specifically, these bills contravene
11 well-established federal law as the FAA holds the
12 sole jurisdiction to regulate all aspects of aviation
13 operations, including noise-related standards and
14 regulations. Uniform federal authority is essential
15 to maintaining safe and efficient transportation in
16 the nation's airspace. Enacting these bills runs
17 counter to just that.

18 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: I'm sorry, you are 30
19 seconds over.

20 JOSH ROUSSEAU: Yep.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And you will have to
22 submit that for public record.

23 JOSH ROUSSEAU: I've submitted testimony
24 and, with all due respect, Chair, you have given a
25 little bit of latitude to a couple other people.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Right, and it's still
3 my hearing that I'm Chairing...

4 JOSH ROUSSEAU: I understand.

5 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And I'm saying your
6 time is over, and we're going to move to the next
7 person.

8 JOSH ROUSSEAU: Understood.

9 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you for
10 submitting it.

11 JOSH ROUSSEAU: Thank you for your
12 flexibility. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you.

14 BRITTANY DAVIES: Good morning. My name is
15 Brittany Davies, and I am the Northeast Regional
16 Director for the National Business Aviation
17 Association, NBAA.

18 NBAA is the leading organization for
19 companies that rely on general aviation aircraft to
20 help make their businesses more efficient,
21 productive, and successful. On behalf of our 11,000
22 member companies, I greatly appreciate the
23 opportunity to submit testimony to you today. As
24 representatives of the general aviation community, we
25 fully recognize the importance of prioritizing the

2 safety and well-being of New York City residents. It
3 is important to note that the business aviation
4 industry is investing billions of dollars into
5 technologies that will dramatically reduce noise
6 levels and the carbon footprint of aviation. The
7 industry is fueling research and development needed
8 for sustainable solutions across a broad spectrum of
9 applications. With a commitment to achieving a net
10 zero emissions by 2050 and 40 percent reduction in
11 emissions over the past four decades, our industry is
12 dedicated to environmental stewardship and
13 innovation. While the industry is actively
14 implementing measures to improve safety and community
15 compatibility, we do not believe the City has the
16 legal authority to regulate aviation operations at
17 New York City heliports. As designated under the
18 Federal Airport Noise and Capacity Act, INCA, only
19 the Federal Aviation Administration has authority to
20 regulate aeronautical operations. The recent ruling
21 of the Second Department involving East Hampton, INCA
22 also specifically applies to all publicly owned
23 facilities and prohibits access restrictions absent
24 FAA scrutiny. Accordingly, Proposed Ordinances number
25 0026-2024 and 0070-2024 should not be adopted.

2 Likewise, the State also may not impose restrictions
3 on operations either directly or via indirect means
4 such as purported taxation and, accordingly, the
5 Proposed Resolutions numbers 0085-2024 and 0226-2024
6 should not be adopted. NBAA strongly opposes all
7 legislation to ban non-essential helicopter
8 operations as well as any proposal to limit the use
9 of New York City's heliport system. However, our
10 industry looks forward to continued engagement to
11 identify and implement effective solutions that
12 address concerns while ensuring the highest levels of
13 safety and environmental stewardship. Thank you.

14 STACY SHEARD: Good morning. My name is
15 Stacy Sheard, and I'm representing the Eastern Region
16 Helicopter Council, an association of local
17 helicopter professionals promoting safety, education,
18 awareness, and advocacy. The ERHC has a community
19 outreach program and is actively working with the FAA
20 to address the concerns of the community and to
21 preserve the last of the New York City heliports for
22 the future. ERHC collaborates with our local, state,
23 and community partners to help alleviate helicopter
24 complaints around New York City and surrounding
25 areas. We use data provided by the FAA to devise

2 higher altitudes and flight paths over and around the
3 most heavily populated residential areas. We
4 recognize that there is room for continued
5 improvement and that with a collaborative effort more
6 can be accomplished. The ERHC's initiative to improve
7 instrument flight routes in and out of New York City
8 is a great example of that. I've been working on this
9 for three years so, by partnering with the FAA, I'd
10 like to announce that new instrument flight routes
11 for helicopters are being designed to utilize during
12 inclement weather, and these new routes will take
13 helicopters to higher altitudes. They will weave us
14 within jet traffic. They will reduce sound
15 signatures, and the first of these procedures will
16 come online this summer with more instrument routes
17 being designed for follow on release by the FAA. By
18 improving flight routes and embracing quieter
19 aircraft technology, the ERHC is demonstrating a
20 commitment to collaboration through technology. By
21 recognizing the value of heliports and collaborating
22 for continued operation, we can promote innovation,
23 enhance transportation options, and drive economic
24 prosperity and accessibility for the community at
25 large. Thank you.

2 LYDON SLEEPER: Hello. I'm Lydon Sleeper
3 from Joby Aviation. Joby is grateful for the
4 opportunity to testify here today and grateful for
5 the City's continuing leadership in paving the way
6 for electric aerial mobility. The City's announcement
7 to add charging infrastructure to support electric
8 vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, eVTOLs, at the
9 iconic Wall Street Heliport as well as East 34th
10 Street heliport ensures that New York City will
11 continue to be a global leader in the future of
12 aviation and pave the way for quiet sustainable
13 mobility. We were honored to bring the Joby aircraft
14 to New York City last November, and we're grateful
15 for all the Members of the Council who were there for
16 that exhibition flight. From day one, the Joby
17 aircraft was designed with acoustics in mind with the
18 number of propellers, blades, blade shape, radius,
19 tip speeds, disk loading, all the aircraft selected
20 to minimize its acoustic footprint and improve the
21 character of the sound produced. The results, the
22 aircraft registered the equivalent of 45 weighted
23 decibels from an altitude of 500 meters at 100 knots
24 airspeed, a sound that Joby believes will be barely
25 perceptible against the ambient noise of cities.

2 Takeoff and landing profiles were found to be below
3 65 decibels, a noise comparable to a normal
4 conversation at a distance of about 100 meters from
5 the flight path. Specific to the legislation
6 resolutions being heard today, Joby is grateful for
7 the Council's prioritization of quiet electric
8 aviation. We share the goal of making aerial mobility
9 quiet, sustainable, and accessible for New Yorkers.
10 We support the City's current approach of working
11 with the entire vertical lift industry to invest in
12 infrastructure needed for us to take off and land
13 from the City's heliports. By embracing public-
14 private solutions to ready the City's infrastructure,
15 New York City will lead the world in quiet, electric
16 aerial mobility. Once the infrastructure is installed
17 and we're flying here, we're confident the operators
18 and passengers will choose our quiet, sustainable
19 aircraft, and we'll see more applications for eVTOLs
20 throughout the region. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you, Lydon.
22 Thank you, folks. I just have a couple of questions.
23 How many of you operate out of one of our city
24 heliports currently?

2 STACY SHEARD: We're not based at any of
3 the heliports in New York City, but we do operate out
4 of the heliports in New York.

5 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay, and are any of
6 you a part of the larger symposium that the EDC
7 mentioned earlier?

8 STACY SHEARD: Absolutely.

9 JOSH ROUSSEAU: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: All of you are.

11 STACEY SHEARD: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Just for
13 clarification, Brittany Davies, you stated you folks
14 are thinking about effective solutions. Have we
15 thought some of those through? Have we implemented
16 any of those, whether it's here or elsewhere?

17 BRITTANY DAVIES: So we work on a
18 continuous basis across the nation with the Vertical
19 Aviation International Association. Our local
20 constituents, Eastern Regional Helicopter Council,
21 we're in continuous conversations in that regard, but
22 one thing I did mention in my written testimony that
23 was submitted was also an initiative across multiple
24 of our alphabet organizations in the aviation sector
25 that's called Climbing Fast, and it is all about our

2 sustainability initiatives moving forward as a
3 collaboration across the aviation sector as a whole.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Great, thank you.

5 Miss Stacy Sheard, if you can just re-clarify for me
6 and I think I missed it, your statement around the
7 jet flight paths or the jet paths.

8 STACY SHEARD: Yeah, so it's incredibly
9 difficult. What's happened with the recent years is
10 helicopter technology has increased greatly. There is
11 similar technology in the latest helicopters as you
12 would find in the newest Boeing jets that you would
13 commute on so, with that technology, we are very
14 capable of flying in bad weather conditions,
15 inclement weather so, when that does happen, in the
16 past we haven't had access out of New York City
17 because you're surrounded by four major airports so
18 it's just been this this quagmire of routing systems
19 for jets typically so weaving helicopter traffic into
20 that, we were very low priority so we've been working
21 for years with the FAA, with our sister and brother
22 associations to try to build relationships and bring
23 our issues to the forefront. One of those was getting
24 a little bit more prioritized on instrument
25 departures. The FAA heard us and about a year ago, I

2 was able to meet with FAA and we talked about our
3 needs and how that would assist. Basically, these
4 routes can help us to depart New York over the water
5 and climb us as fast as possible and get us out of
6 New York City and blend us with jet traffic or below
7 or keep us clear of the flow of jet traffic and get
8 us to where we need to go, which is out of the city.
9 Normally it's an instrument departure so when the
10 weather descends on the city, we can depart and we
11 don't have to fly underneath it any longer so that's
12 essentially what it'll do for us, and it'll really
13 help us cut down our sound signatures so we can fly
14 neighborly.

15 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you for that
16 clarification. I appreciate it. Being that all of you
17 folks are a part of this symposium, I did hear in
18 multiple testimony that it's not our jurisdiction or
19 legality in terms of determining whether or not
20 electrification is in the immediacy or in the
21 direction, we heard from the EDC with their
22 conversations with the FAA and being a part of the
23 symposium that they're trying to get to it in 2025
24 but within at least the next two years so I'd love to
25 hear feedback and thoughts around some of the

2 responses you folks gave in terms of whether or not
3 legally, it's our jurisdiction and like the hopes of
4 it coming, knowing that you're all a part of the
5 symposium and knowing that we're all receiving the
6 information on moving towards electrification.

7 LYDON SLEEPER: I'll just speak to the, to
8 Joby and our certification process. We're working
9 through our process with the FAA. I think the
10 statements made by EDC earlier about timing, working
11 through as early as 2025, and commercial operations
12 beginning quickly after that. That is what we are
13 tracking toward with the FAA so from a timeline
14 perspective, that's correct.

15 JOSH ROUSSEAU: Madam Chair, I would just
16 add too on the symposium piece, which I think is
17 critically important to highlight, it's not just
18 talk, and I think that's really important to point
19 out. In fact, we had a meeting scheduled previously
20 with FAA and some of our friends in the room from
21 Stop the Chop for today, but your hearing took
22 precedence as it should so I think we have more good
23 news coming, and I think the symposium really should
24 be held up as an example of that collaboration with
25 our community partners, with our industry partners,

2 and with government regulators as well. Certainly, as
3 we are able to get this information out, absolutely
4 want to keep the Council apprised of that as well so
5 you can get that information out to your constituents
6 as well so I just wanted to highlight that as well.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yeah, I appreciate
8 that. I think that from the oversight hearing to
9 conversations with the EDC to conversations with
10 other elected officials from federal government, FAA,
11 you folks, that is what's brought us to this point
12 and to this package of bills and to see where we can
13 land on ensuring that we are in lockstep with the FAA
14 and positive actors to put a foundational setting or
15 like a goalpost for where this industry needs to move
16 and actually being in consideration with community
17 health and being and safety so I appreciate those
18 responses.

19 Now, I would like to turn it over to
20 Council Member Brewer who has questions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. We have
22 spent a lot of time on the tourism, not the transport
23 so much, getting them to fly higher, particularly
24 along the Hudson River, but they don't. I don't know
25 that this little thing without doors that I was in

2 from New Jersey could fly with the jets so I'm just
3 wondering is that what you're envisioning? These
4 tourism things, to be honest with you, are more
5 noise-provoking than perhaps even what we've been
6 talking about today coming out of downtown. They are
7 like constant all summer long so my question is what
8 height can they fly at that would be better or will
9 they do that and can they do that? I'm talking about
10 the things without the doors.

11 STACY SHEARD: Yes, that is something that
12 is in discussion, routing altitudes, and
13 restructuring routes to take them, when neighbors
14 make complaints and we hear that and we realize that
15 there's an issue over a neighborhood, we have to work
16 with Air Traffic Control, FAA, and the powers that be
17 in order to move routes. The FAA will hear noise
18 complaints, ERHC will hear, we all hear the noise
19 complaints, and that's when we bring it to the
20 meetings and say, hey, we're, we have a hot spot
21 here, we need to relocate this, we need to look at
22 the altitude, we need to see what we can do to make
23 it better for the community.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: If you can do
25 anything about Kearny, New Jersey, flying to New York

2 City? They come in the hundreds on the weekends right
3 over Central Park, right over Governors Island, right
4 over Brooklyn Bridge Park. You can do something about
5 that?

6 STACY SHEARD: No, I don't think that's
7 what I was referring to. I was just referring to
8 adjusting routes, routing altitudes and adjusting
9 locations of routes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right, but, in
11 other words you can't do anything about that
12 particular situation in New Jersey?

13 STACY SHEARD: No ma'am, I don't think
14 that was, stopping flights is not something that we
15 do.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay, thank you.

17 JOSH ROUSSEAU: Council Member, if I could
18 just add to your question. I think just like we work
19 with our members respectively in our organizations in
20 New York State, we're also working with those members
21 in New Jersey and elsewhere as well so I can tell you
22 that those conversations are ongoing literally on a
23 weekly basis to make sure that our members are being
24 respectful of the communities that they live and
25 serve and fly in, and I think, again, referring to

2 good news, it's forthcoming and certainly you guys
3 will absolutely have that information in your
4 pockets. We have the ability to affect our members,
5 right? We all work together, and I think it's
6 critically important to note that we strongly,
7 strongly encourage our members to be at the top of
8 their game as far as best practices and being
9 responsible to the community so those conversations
10 are ongoing. I think to Stacy's point, we can't
11 force, to use that word, folks to do things, but we,
12 certainly within our ability as an organization, an
13 all-inclusive organization in our industry, we do
14 have the ability to strongly encourage and push our
15 members in the right direction. The right direction
16 being from your perspective.

17 LYDON SLEEPER: If I could also just say
18 you mentioned Kearney, we've got a partnership with
19 the Kearney team where we're actually going to add
20 our charging infrastructure at Kearney so we'll be
21 able to take off and land there as well as Wall
22 Street and East 34th Street so we're excited about
23 the progress we're making in the City, but we're also
24 expanding to heliports like Kearney.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Doors off or on?

2 LYDON SLEEPER: We'll have doors on, yeah.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Tourists want the
4 doors off. That's the problem. I don't agree with it,
5 but I'm telling you that's what's going on because I
6 was in the helicopter.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much.
8 I'd now like to recognize Council Member Restler.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Thank you so
10 much, Chair.

11 Just one question for Mr. Sleeper. I
12 think that the environmental benefits of electronic
13 helicopters are obvious and straightforward. The
14 noise benefits, I just would like some greater
15 clarification on. We've heard from some neighbors
16 that there are still significant noise issues. We've
17 heard from others that they're almost silent. Could
18 you give us some clarity based on the testing that
19 you all have been doing?

20 LYDON SLEEPER: Yeah, I appreciate that,
21 and we actually have a partnership with NASA where
22 NASA came out to our facilities in California and
23 measured our aircraft from 100 meters away at
24 takeoff, we flew overhead at about 1,500 feet, and
25 they actually released that study, and it was the

2 sound that I mentioned before but, in the context of
3 New York, what we're really excited about when we
4 were here in November, we took off, we had a chase
5 helicopter so you could only hear the helicopter, but
6 the day before we flew, we didn't have the chase, and
7 we actually had teammates across in Brooklyn Bridge
8 Park doing measurements of the sound, and it was
9 imperceptible from Brooklyn Bridge Park, and that was
10 while we were at hover and transition so the
11 fundamentally different sound profile of our
12 aircraft, we really do think will change the way
13 people in New York experience aerial mobility, both
14 as passengers but also as people playing in the park
15 and people over the city listening overhead.

16 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: And just a quick
17 followup to that, Mr. Sleeper, how did you folks
18 monitor that?

19 LYDON SLEEPER: Yeah, we just set up
20 microphones around because we wanted to make sure
21 that, it was the first time we'd flown in an urban
22 setting like New York so we wanted to know exactly
23 how we would hear what it would sound like so we just
24 had our folk with microphone. For the study that we
25 did with NASA, they actually came out and set up a

2 whole set of arrays on the ground. The anecdote that
3 we like to tell is when they came out, they did a
4 bunch of measurements when we were flying overhead,
5 and they were picking up the grass from the field
6 next to us so we had to mow the grass in order for
7 them to get a more accurate reading of our aircraft
8 because it's so quiet.

9 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yeah, I saw within
10 your testimony, and I thank you for being brief
11 because it was many pages that you did have decibel
12 ratings comparatively, and so we are able to use
13 decibel meter or at least like noise meters to
14 regulate some of this and the noise complaint issues
15 that we have. Thank you.

16 Seeing no other questions, this panel is
17 dismissed.

18 Thank you, folks.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, I'm calling because I
20 (INAUDIBLE).

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Can someone mute our
22 Zoom participant? Thank you.

23 I'd now like to call up, it's a very
24 important call, Lara Birnback, Melissa Elstein,
25 Andrew Rosenthal, William Thomas, and Kenneth Lay.

2 Anyone can begin when you're ready, okay?

3 Just let us know so we can get the Sergeant.

4 Sergeants, are we ready for time?

5 Okay, you can begin.

6 WILLIAM THOMAS: Are we operating with a
7 two-minute time limit just so, we are, okay.

8 I'm Bill Thomas. I'm a board member of
9 Stop the Chop New York, New Jersey. I have submitted
10 to you my written testimony so I'm not going to cover
11 all of it because you can read it at your leisure. I
12 would like to highlight a few key points and also
13 make some comments about some of the testimony that
14 you've already heard today. Stop the Chop is the
15 leading organization in New York City that's
16 organized really to seek to ban non-essential
17 helicopter flights in the New York City area, and we
18 applaud the City Council for its interest in this
19 same issue.

20 First, I'd like to just highlight a few
21 of the problems, some of which have been alluded to
22 already in the questioning with non-essential
23 helicopter flights. First of all, they're not safe.
24 Someone earlier said that we don't have any crashes
25 in New York City. There have been 30 of them since

2 1980 including one hijacking as my friend Andy
3 reminds me. Excessive noise increases the risk of
4 hypertension and heart attacks and other forms of
5 illnesses in all of us, and they're an environmental
6 justice issue. There are communities in New York City
7 that have historically been disproportionately
8 affected by all forms of pollution, and many flights
9 fly over those very same communities. It's for these
10 reasons that we applaud, as I said before, the
11 Council's interest in these issues. I want to touch
12 on a couple kind of objections or issues that you
13 hear in response to efforts to curtail these flights.
14 One is the flights will just move to New Jersey. As
15 Councilman Restler said earlier in his questioning,
16 that's simply not the case. There's just not enough
17 capacity, not enough willingness on the part of
18 tourists who would otherwise be in New York City to
19 schlep over to New Jersey to get these flights, A. B,
20 the other City heliport, particularly the one on the
21 west side, is already at capacity, and therefore
22 could not accept additional flights at this time in
23 any event. Also, tourist flights won't hurt the city
24 economy. Even the helicopter's industry own flawed
25 and outdated analysis seem to acknowledge that most

2 of this economic activity from tourists would simply
3 shift if we didn't have helicopter tourist flights.
4 They would shift to other forms of tourism as well...

5 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: You're approaching 30
6 seconds over so I need you to wrap. We do have over a
7 hundred people.

8 WILLIAM THOMAS: I'm going to turn it over
9 to colleagues who will expand on some of the
10 conversations.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much.

12 WILLIAM THOMAS: Thank you.

13 ANDREW ROSENTHAL: My name is Andrew
14 Rosenthal. I have lived on the Upper West Side and
15 happily paid my taxes for over 36 years. I love New
16 York City. I would like to thank Majority Leader and
17 Committee Chair Fariás for holding this hearing and
18 being a champion of everyday New Yorkers.
19 Unfortunately, despite promises by the EDC and
20 industry to make things better, they have done
21 nothing since 2016 to make life better for New
22 Yorkers. Today, I would like to focus on 3-1-1
23 helicopter noise complaints. This picture, and they
24 took it away from me downstairs, but I think we've
25 covered the volume of 3-1-1 complaints and the

2 escalation of those. I had a chart here. It tells an
3 important story, but a very incomplete one. What it
4 doesn't show is that the problem is much bigger than
5 the data even shows. When many, maybe most New
6 Yorkers see a helicopter in the sky, they assume it's
7 NYPD or news, and therefore don't think of
8 complaining. If they did, the charts, the numbers,
9 would be much more. It does not accurately reflect
10 the misery in the city because sane people stop using
11 3-1-1 a few months after they start because there are
12 no results. Unlike a pothole complaint or even other
13 categories of noise complaints where the NYPD shows
14 up, nothing happens when citizens file noise
15 complaints in 3-1-1. Instead, they will get a reply
16 from the EDC saying either this helicopter is not
17 within its jurisdiction or, two, the New York City
18 EDC determined that the helicopter tour operator was
19 operating within the limits of the New York City
20 Helicopter Sightseeing Plan. I have received both of
21 these 100 percent inaccurate responses in the past
22 month, despite submitting screenshots documenting
23 that the tour flights originated at DMH and that the
24 flights passed directly over parkland in violation of
25 the 2016 agreement. How many times would any of you

2 make a complaint given these negative responses?

3 Lastly, I'm wrapping up, filing a 3-1-1 complaint has
4 been made very difficult over the last four years.

5 There is a gauntlet of questions that 99 percent of
6 the citizens will be unable to answer, such as where
7 the flight originated and whether it's a tourist
8 flight. Multiply the numbers that have been reported
9 by 10 or 100 and you'll get an idea of the real
10 severity. Unlike many of the issues facing the City
11 Council, the helicopter problem we are discussing
12 today can be solved this year if our elected
13 representatives choose to do so. Please pass
14 (INAUDIBLE) 26.

15 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much for
16 your testimony.

17 Folks, we will be here to midnight if we
18 keep going like this.

19 MELISSA ELSTEIN: Yes, people are very
20 passionate about this, rightfully so, and we thank
21 you so much, Majority Leader, for hosting us as well
22 as all the other Council Members for being here and
23 your questions.

24 My name is Melissa Elstein. I'm on the
25 board of Stop the Chop NY/NJ, as well as the board of

2 West 80s Neighborhood Association. Both are
3 volunteer-led local grassroots non-profits. We
4 strongly support the passage of the three helicopter
5 bills and three resolutions being heard today. I live
6 on the Upper West Side, like Andy, and there are
7 numerous days per week in our neighborhood it sounds
8 like a war zone due to all the fossil fuel-based
9 tourism commuter helicopters traversing the Hudson
10 River, otherwise known as the new helicopter highway,
11 and I may add that over water doesn't necessarily
12 help because it amplifies the noise so the Hudson
13 River is now a helicopter highway as well as the many
14 cross-town flights negatively impacting our homes as
15 well as Riverside and Central Parks. I also thought
16 initially that they were media, news, emergency
17 services, but became involved with this cause when I
18 realized that it was so unfair that simple joy rides
19 and commutes by helicopter were creating so much
20 misery so basically, this volunteer work, which has
21 consumed my life and we're up until midnight/2 a.m.
22 working on this. We are prepared. How could just a
23 few polluting companies be allowed to wreak havoc on
24 our lives to the point where the constant and
25 disturbing noise has created enormously stressful

2 conditions diminished Q of L so this is a story I
3 hear from New Yorkers throughout the city, including
4 from actor, mother, and Brooklynite Amy Schumer, who
5 is filming a movie today and couldn't be here, so I
6 am reading part of her submitted statement. She
7 writes, "Our homes, neighborhoods, and parks are
8 bombarded with the deafening and alarming noise of
9 these choppers, 12 hours a day most days. I urge our
10 elected leaders to end the flights of these non-
11 essential helicopters over New York City and its nine
12 million residents." We agree with Ms. Schumer, and to
13 those who say the non-essential helicopter ban would
14 harm the economy, I heard those same faulty arguments
15 when I was volunteering with my neighborhood
16 association to help ban fracking in New York, single-
17 use plastic shopping bags and straws, smoking in bars
18 and parks. The New York City economy will survive a
19 ban on this niche industry and, by the way, Disney
20 World and Disneyland have such bans. It has become
21 untenable. No other world-class city has this
22 unnecessary problem. It's time we end the Wild West
23 like chopper skies over New York, improve public mass
24 transit, and promote clean and green, quiet
25 transportation modes instead. Thank you so much.

2 LARA BIRNBACK: Good morning, or good
3 afternoon at this point. I'll try to be as quick as I
4 can, and I know some of these points have been made
5 already so I'll try to improvise a little here, but
6 I'm not as good at that as some of the others here in
7 the room. My name is Lara Birnback. I'm the Executive
8 Director of the Brooklyn Heights Association as well
9 as an advisory board member of Stop the Chop New
10 York/New Jersey. I want to thank all of you Members
11 of the Council and staff from our Borough President's
12 offices and federal representatives here for your
13 attention and commitment to regulating helicopter
14 noise. Pollution and safety in our city, which is
15 evidenced in part through the bills and resolutions
16 under discussion today. My hope is that we are
17 finally going to have some relief from the
18 detrimental impacts of fossil fuel-based helicopter
19 flights on our communities, environment, and quality
20 of life. We've heard how New Yorkers are disturbed in
21 our beautiful public spaces. It seems incredibly
22 bizarre to me that we would spend taxpayer dollars,
23 investment, time, created non-profits to guard our
24 waterfront parks, the amazing things happening at
25 Governors Island, Central Park, etc., and yet we

2 allow this relentless noise and pollution to disrupt
3 our experience in those public spaces that are really
4 treasures of our city. Why would we invest the time
5 and money into creating these spaces for people to
6 enjoy and then literally ruin them for the benefit of
7 some joy-riding tourists and some folks who can't get
8 to the Hamptons quickly enough? It just doesn't make
9 any sense. Noise pollution we know is deadly. We've
10 known it for years. Numerous studies confirm this.
11 We've talked about the impact of the pollution and
12 the fossil fuels. We've talked about safety. We've
13 had tragic accidents associated with helicopters. Not
14 to mention the risks of terrorists or other bad
15 actors using our skies against us. We heard already
16 this morning that it's like the Wild West. The FAA
17 does not regulate appropriately the airspace over New
18 York, which is bizarre if you think about that, for a
19 city like New York. I'm going to wrap up here. I just
20 want to emphasize that the trade-offs involving our
21 health, our safety, and our environment, you'd think
22 there'd be substantial economic benefit coming to New
23 York City. There is not so I implore the Council and
24 the Mayor to prioritize the well-being, safety, and
25 environmental sustainability of our city and its

2 millions of residents over the privilege of a very
3 few and end these flights as soon as possible. Thank
4 you very much.

5 KENNETH LAY: Is it ready? Good morning,
6 and thank you for this opportunity. My name is
7 Kenneth Lay. I am testifying as a Brooklyn resident
8 and a board member of Stop the Chop. I previously
9 testified before this Council in November 2022 about
10 the incessant and deafening helicopter flights that
11 constantly fly over huge swaths of Brooklyn,
12 including many environmental justice communities such
13 as Brownsville, East New York, and more. The
14 situation has, if anything, only worsened. Last week,
15 for example, a Blade flight passed over the park
16 where I was watching the solar eclipse with hundreds
17 of my neighbors at the exact moment of peak coverage,
18 rendering it impossible to speak to anyone for nearly
19 30 seconds. This happens dozens of times per day. You
20 already heard my story and my wholehearted support
21 for these bills so I will instead use my time to let
22 other area residents have their say. Here are a
23 number of quotes we at Stop the Chop have collected
24 from New Yorkers. We have hundreds more I will be
25 submitting as my written testimony.

2 Brooklyn. There is perhaps no activity
3 that disturbs more residents for the benefit of so
4 few people than the noise associated with these
5 unnecessary helicopter flights.

6 Manhattan. The excessive noise on the
7 Upper West Side has become intolerable, yet another
8 reason for long time New Yorkers to leave the city.

9 Bronx. The helicopters are tormenting
10 Spuyten Duyvil. Please stop them now.

11 Manhattan. Please let us live in peace in
12 our apartments.

13 Brooklyn. It is outrageous that fun for a
14 few non-New Yorkers makes life miserable for
15 thousands of voting New Yorkers.

16 Queens. I work at the Statue of Liberty
17 and the helicopter noise is outrageous. It truly
18 impacts my day and the visitors of the statue
19 negatively.

20 Manhattan. I report noise problems in the
21 3-1-1 app and I call my representatives, and nothing
22 seems to happen.

23 Brooklyn. It's become impossible to sit
24 in Brooklyn Bridge Park or in the Brooklyn Promenade.
25 The helicopter noise is unrelenting.

2 Queens. This is not bearable anymore.

3 Manhattan. The helicopter noise along the
4 Hudson is utterly outrageous. It is greatly affecting
5 the pleasure to be found in Riverside Park.

6 Bronx. The helicopters are so loud and
7 hover over people's private apartments at all hours
8 of the day and night.

9 Brooklyn. We can't even sit outside and
10 have a conversation sitting next to each other
11 because of these commuter helicopters.

12 Manhattan. It's high time the politicians
13 began listening to their taxpaying constituents
14 rather than lobbyists. This is a grievous
15 environmental and quality of life issue. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much. I
17 don't see any questions for panelists. Council Member
18 Restler.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Just for Miss
20 Birnback, BHA gets an impressive amount of incoming
21 from neighbors across Brooklyn Heights about
22 different quality-of-life issues. Could you just give
23 some context on like how does helicopter complaints
24 compare to other issues that you hear from neighbors?
25

2 LARA BIRNBACK: Sure, absolutely. We've
3 been getting complaints about helicopters for years,
4 but even more so in the past I would say three to
5 four years, as evidenced by the 3-1-1 complaints.
6 It's definitely a top, top issue and a top concern of
7 residents in Brooklyn Heights who can hear them,
8 those who are living anywhere close within a few
9 blocks of the waterfront, who are trying to enjoy the
10 promenade as we heard, who are trying to enjoy
11 Brooklyn Bridge Park, who are down in traveling down
12 into Dumbo. I'm hearing it constantly again and again
13 and again.

14 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you folks so
15 much for your advocacy and your testimony today and
16 the work we've been doing together. I appreciate it.
17 You are now dismissed.

18 I'd now like to call up Janet Handal,
19 Stephen Tanenbaum, Michael Hannaman, Roger Manning,
20 and Merritt Birnbaum.

21 ROGER MANNING: Do we start or?

22 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yes, we're ready to
23 begin.

24 ROGER MANNING: Hi, I'm Roger Manning, co-
25 founder of MAGIC, the Metro Area Governors Island

2 Coalition and, as you may have heard, Governors
3 Island is severely affected by sightseeing
4 helicopters. Governors Island, the city's unique
5 public space in the middle of New York Harbor, is
6 seriously impacted by sightseeing helicopter noise on
7 a daily basis. The constant aerial assault on the
8 island's historic district, national monument, high
9 school, park lands, arts and environmental projects,
10 and wildlife has been described as soul crushing.
11 That's a quote from more than one person. At times,
12 we've counted as many as 18 helicopters in 15 minutes
13 going by and, yes, they do fly over water but
14 Buttermilk Channel is so narrow, it doesn't really
15 help, and then the flights from New Jersey tend to
16 hover over the island for long periods of time. Of
17 course, I'd say the majority of the flights do come
18 from the Wall Street heliport, but a lot of
19 helicopters do come from New Jersey so we're hoping
20 that federal thing that's in the works is successful
21 as well as this awesome City Council stuff that you
22 all are putting forward, and that's it. I'd like to
23 thank Stop the Chop for all their work.

24 STEPHEN TANNENBAUM: There we go. Steven
25 Tannenbaum. I live and work in Prospect Park South in

2 Central Brooklyn, and I'm here to bring you news from
3 out there that it's not just a waterfront issue. The
4 JFK round passes through our historic landmark
5 district, the mainly wood-framed houses, so the
6 residents can't even escape the sound by going
7 inside. The other issue in central Brooklyn is that
8 these helicopters are veering off the FAA helicopter
9 route that's Flatbush Avenue, and they're basically
10 making a shortcut to the tip of Manhattan and then to
11 the West 30th Street heliport, and that path takes
12 the helicopters over Prospect Park, over the parade
13 grounds where all the ball fields are, over the Caton
14 School playground, and it's adjacent to the Brooklyn
15 Botanic Garden, and I just think that in a civic
16 place, there's no reason to be ruining these crown
17 jewels of the city. Thank you.

18 JANET HANDAL: Hello. My name is Janet
19 Handal, and I'm President of the Waterside Tenants
20 Association in Manhattan and represent the 4,000
21 people living there. I want to take a moment to thank
22 the Majority Leader, Council Member Brewer, and
23 Council Member Restler for your leadership on this
24 really, really important topic. Waterside is located
25 in Manhattan on the East River between 23rd and 28th

2 Street directly across the FDR from Bellevue. We are
3 built on a triangular platform in the river, which
4 places us out in the middle of the river. At this
5 spot, the East River is a little over half a mile
6 wide. We're here today to speak in support of the
7 package of bills, especially given that we have very
8 near to us the heliport on East 34th Street, which
9 provides almost incessant noise and it has
10 significant impacts on our community. However, the
11 tenants at Waterside think that this package needs to
12 be expanded to include the seaplanes that land on the
13 East River directly in front of us. These seaplanes
14 use the 23rd Street Marina for passenger embarking
15 and disembarking. The marina is managed by EDC. All
16 of the issues cited about the helicopter noise and
17 air pollution apply to the seaplanes, but there's the
18 additional point that I wanted to make about this.
19 The helicopters pretty much go up and down, but the
20 seaplanes have to have a runway to take off and land.
21 In the summertime, we have planes about every three
22 to four minutes so it is absolutely incessant. Friday
23 afternoons, Thursday afternoons, Sunday night, Monday
24 morning. It's dangerous because these planes are, you
25 see them just like that. They're lined up, and I'm

2 getting down to next to nothing so, anyway, I just
3 want to tell you that it's very risky to Waterside
4 and also to the other side of the river. When they
5 started flying there, nothing was built there.
6 Waterside wasn't even built there. It's a very
7 different situation now, and it needs to be rectified
8 for public safety and health. Thank you.

9 MICHAEL HANNAMAN: Hi. My name is Michael
10 Hannaman. I am a legal extern at the Natural
11 Resources Defense Council and a law student at NYU
12 School of Law. NRDC is a not-for-profit legal and
13 scientific organization active in a wide range of
14 environmental health, natural resources protection,
15 and quality-of-life issues across the country, around
16 the world, and here in New York City, where our main
17 offices have been located since the organization was
18 founded in 1970. Excessive noise threatens the health
19 and quality of life of New York City residents.
20 Exposure to heightened transportation noise increases
21 the risk of arterial inflammation and major heart
22 problems, and research has indicated that it does so
23 independently of other environmental, socioeconomic,
24 and behavioral factors. Helicopter noise is
25 especially harmful to human health because it is

2 intermittent and exceptionally loud. Researchers have
3 found that intermittent noise is associated with
4 higher rates of heart disease, stroke, and death as
5 compared to comparable levels of background noise,
6 and chopper noise is especially piercing. The FAA and
7 NASA have both found that the public perceives
8 helicopter noise to be twice as loud as comparable
9 decibel fixed wing aircraft. The noise from these
10 gratuitous helicopter flights is inescapable in New
11 York City. It bombards residents multiple times per
12 day in their own homes, in their workplaces, and in
13 the city's public parks. Noise is not the only
14 environmental hazard imposed by unnecessary
15 helicopter flights. Tourist helicopters produce
16 approximately 950 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions
17 every hour, which is over 40 times the average hourly
18 emissions of a passenger car containing the same
19 number of people. Some helicopters still burn toxic
20 leaded aviation fuel. The EDC-owned East 34th Street
21 Heliport and Downtown Manhattan Heliport produce, as
22 of 2022, 58,000 helicopter flights annually, and 95
23 percent of those flights are tourist joy rides. It
24 makes little sense to allow these highly polluting
25 and unnecessary flights to continue at a time when

2 the city's also spending billions of dollars on
3 climate change resiliency projects. For these
4 reasons, NRDC supports each of these three bills and
5 three resolutions under consideration today. These
6 would cut polluting helicopter air contaminants,
7 achieve City and State global warming emissions
8 reduction goals, and reduce noise levels across the
9 city, improving the quality of life for hundreds of
10 thousands of New Yorkers. Thank you.

11 MERRITT BIRNBAUM: Hi, my name is Merritt
12 Birnbaum. I'm the President and CEO of Riverside Park
13 Conservancy. I'm here to voice our emphatic support
14 for all the legislation being considered today.
15 Riverside Park Conservancy works through an agreement
16 with NYC Parks to help the City care for 450 acres of
17 parkland that spread across five parks along six
18 miles of waterfront in Upper Manhattan from West 59th
19 Street to West 181st Street. In other words, we care
20 for the precious public green space that is adjacent
21 to the major highway for helicopters that was
22 mentioned before, i.e., the Hudson River. For
23 decades, non-essential helicopter traffic has
24 traversed this river with impunity, providing
25 tourists, as has been mentioned, dozens of times

2 today with a 15-minute joyride while saddling our
3 parks with extreme noise pollution, carbon emissions,
4 and environmental degradation. The incessant noise
5 from helicopter traffic disrupts the tranquility of
6 our parks, shattering the peace and serenity that
7 these natural spaces are meant to provide. Families
8 seeking respite from the hustle of city life are
9 instead met with the relentless roar of these menaces
10 overhead, and it's not just an annoyance. It's an
11 attack on our mental well-being and enjoyment of our
12 public spaces. It isn't just noise. As was mentioned
13 about accidents, on a sunny Saturday morning in 2007
14 when Riverside Park's ball fields are normally filled
15 with hundreds of children, a tourist helicopter had
16 to make an emergency landing on the ball field right
17 on the infield at 77th Street. Thankfully, this
18 happened in July, which was after the main baseball
19 season. Otherwise, it could have been much more
20 catastrophic. Beyond the noise and safety concerns,
21 we cannot overstate the environmental impacts of the
22 constant helicopter traffic. The carbon and pollutant
23 emissions contribute to air and water pollution,
24 further jeopardizing the health of our communities,
25 and so I just wanted to say, knowing that I'm

2 speaking to the Economic Development Committee here,
3 Parks, as you know, brings in tens of millions of
4 dollars of concessions to the city coffers, which
5 really dwarfs the 2.7 or 2 million that the City
6 earns from these heliports. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Seeing no questions,
8 the panel is now dismissed.

9 I'd now like to call up Roland Lewis,
10 Alex Matthiessen, Warrie Price, Markie Hancock, and
11 Ken Coughlin. Trying my best with pronunciations here
12 today folks. I know how that is with Fariás.

13 ROLAND LEWIS: All right. Good afternoon,
14 Majority Leader Fariás, Council Members. I'm Roland
15 Lewis, a consultant to Stop the Chop. I'd like to
16 make two very brief points, one based on my prior
17 employment and one based on where I live. I ran an
18 organization called the Waterfront Alliance for 13
19 years, and you've heard I think and you'll hear more
20 from my friend Warrie and others, the effect that
21 helicopter traffic has on the tranquility of our
22 public spaces. I'd like to talk to you about actually
23 the economic impact I think Merritt alluded to just a
24 second ago. One of the statements that you'll have in
25 in the press release is from Alex Pincus who runs the

2 Grand Banks Oyster Bar, and he employs 300 people,
3 and he's had customers ask for refunds because of
4 helicopter traffic over his restaurants, 300. That's
5 far more than that employed by the helicopter
6 industry and, if you've been to other great
7 waterfront cities, London or Stockholm and we talked
8 about Paris, Lincoln was talking about that before,
9 these are economic engines. We've invested billions
10 and billions of dollars into our waterfront
11 thankfully with great parks and the ferry transit,
12 all sorts of things happening on the water's edge. We
13 could have so much more economic activity if it
14 weren't for the nuisance of helicopter traffic so
15 we're leaving money and jobs on the table is what I'm
16 trying to say by this industry continuing.

17 The second point is just basically where
18 I live. I live in Flatbush, a working-class community
19 similar to Parkchester. Nurses, sanitation workers,
20 you name it, the essential workers, the backbone. As
21 mentioned before, I used to think they were police
22 helicopters overhead all the time. They're not. I
23 tell my neighbors, yes, they are going to the
24 Hamptons, yes, they're going to JFK. It is unfair.
25 They go over our neighborhood. They go over East New

2 York. It is an economic equity issue that you have to
3 address as well so thank you for your time. Please
4 push harder, push fast, get this done, the more at
5 every level of government that we move this ball
6 forward, the sooner we'll be done with this plague,
7 as my colleague said earlier.

8 KEN COUGHLIN: Hello, my name is Ken
9 Coughlin, and I'm here to speak on behalf of
10 Manhattan Community Board 7 in support of the bills
11 that are before us to reduce or eliminate non-
12 essential helicopters over New York. I'm also a board
13 member of Stop the Chop NY/NJ. Community Board 7
14 encompasses the Upper West Side of Manhattan from
15 59th through 110th Streets. On most days, the loud
16 drone of helicopters passing overhead has become the
17 new normal in our neighborhood there. These are
18 tourists and commuter flights traveling up and down
19 the Hudson and crossing the district. Tens of
20 thousands of these flights originate or land at the
21 two City-owned heliports. These tens of thousands of
22 flights have been matched by tens of thousands of
23 complaints to 3-1-1. Between 2022 and 2023,
24 helicopter noise complaints in our district nearly
25 doubled from 11,000 to more than 21,000. In January

2 2020, Community Board 7 voted unanimously to support
3 our elected officials' efforts to reduce helicopter
4 traffic in the city, including support for a federal
5 bill that would prohibit non-essential flights within
6 New York City airspace. One year later, again by
7 unanimous vote, we called on the City to stop
8 promoting helicopter sightseeing tours on its
9 marketing website, NYC and Company. This promotion
10 subsequently ended thanks to the efforts of Gale
11 Brewer when she was Borough President, and I am
12 submitting those CB7 resolutions here. Manhattan
13 Community Board 7 strongly supports the current
14 Council bills to end non-essential flights at the two
15 City-run heliports as well as other proposals and
16 resolutions to reduce or ban tourist and commuter
17 traffic over our district and city. Thank you.

18 WARRIE PRICE: Is it on? Thank you. I'm
19 Warrie Price, the Founder and President of the
20 Battery Conservancy. We've been working under the
21 constant deafening noise of helicopters for over 30
22 years. We've transformed New York's historic Battery.
23 These 25 acres are just a mere 280 meters from the
24 downtown heliport with its perpetual engines that
25 never shut down during their 30,000 annual trips. It

2 is constant. Yes, all-day noise from 30,000 choppers
3 with its average of four passengers. We're talking
4 about 120,000 people versus the Battery's annual
5 visitorship of 44 million people who pass by, commute
6 through, come to see the statue, or take classes at
7 the Battery Urban Farm. How dare EDC prioritize a
8 detrimental business over the well-being of millions
9 of children and adults who desperately need and seek
10 nature, beauty, and a livable community. We are a
11 24/7 work community which began in the early '90s and
12 continues growing with a vigorous rate of residential
13 conversion today. The Battery Conservancy, with its
14 partners at New York City Parks and with funding by
15 the New York City Council, has created a paradise of
16 240,000 square feet of perennial gardens, the
17 Seaglass Carousel, Acres of Woodland, the Battery
18 Playscape with Showbox Theater, and two urban farms.
19 We value the buzz of our dragonflies and the
20 pollinator bees and the joyful voices of children at
21 play, all compromised by non-essential chopper noise.
22 I submit my testimony with a letter from a
23 neighboring school that no longer will use our
24 Showbox Theater for its Shakespearean plays because
25 of battling constant noise from the heliport. The

2 most difficult aspect of producing these theatrical
3 things is ambient noise, and they cannot come any
4 longer. I plead for the passage of your Council-
5 initiated bills today. We must ban all of the non-
6 essential flights. To talk to EDC, right now in the
7 Battery, two major climate projects are taking place.
8 The one along the water's edge is run by EDC. It's
9 over 200 million dollars. As you'll see from these
10 two photos, taken in January 13th.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: You are 30 seconds
12 over time. I know you submitted your testimony.

13 WARRIE PRICE: And then these photos, I
14 will also submit. Climate change is now. This
15 breaching of our waterfront happened in January this
16 year.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much for
18 your testimony. I appreciate it.

19 ALEX MATTHIESSEN: Ready? Okay. Thank you.
20 Good afternoon, Majority Leader Fariás and other
21 honorable Council Members, Gale, my old friend Gale.

22 First, I wanted to thank you for the work
23 you're doing here. I would urge you though to go for
24 a full ban of non-essential helicopters. The whole
25 eVTOL idea is a pipe dream at this point anyway. It's

2 going to be years until those are really in great
3 enough number and reliability to replace petrol
4 helicopters. I'm here for one specific reason, which
5 is to encourage the City to drop its plan to
6 basically give a new five and, let's be realistic,
7 20-year license to a helicopter port at the Downtown
8 Manhattan Heliport instead of returning Pier Six to
9 its original use as a maritime freight terminal.
10 There's at least one application before the EDC now
11 that is putting forward a marine maritime freight-
12 focused proposal. All the other ones are more
13 helicopters. The City is paid lip service with a 10
14 percent portion that goes to maritime freight, but
15 it's not real. If we're serious about transitioning
16 to a more climate friendly city, which we should be
17 the leader on, we need to start finding those few
18 piers that are left and devoting them to blue
19 highways to green freight. I've included in my
20 testimony a report prepared by the Center for Post
21 Carbon Logistics, but it makes it very clear there's
22 an overwhelming case for maritime freight over
23 helicopters at Pier Six, better economics, more jobs
24 created, more public benefit gained, and virtual
25 disappearance of noise and pollution. I just want to

2 say also that this initiative of Blue Highways is the
3 next logical step to follow congestion pricing. With
4 a fully functioning maritime freight pier, you could
5 get more than 1,000 trucks a day off of New York City
6 streets, bridges, tunnels, highways. It'd be a
7 phenomenal change and improvement to our air quality,
8 safety, street safety, etc. I want to say two more
9 quick things, and that is for decades now, the City
10 has promoted blue highways. Very little is done. This
11 is an opportunity for the City Council, for the Adams
12 Administration to finally make good on those many
13 declarations and actually put some boats in the
14 water, electric boats to move our cargo and free up
15 our roads and bridges, and the second thing, just to
16 remind you, it doesn't get mentioned a lot is that
17 this is a public asset publicly owned asset. It's a
18 maritime asset. Why are we devoting it to private
19 profit with so little money to the City with so huge
20 an impact on tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands
21 of New Yorkers for private profit. This is a public
22 asset. It should be devoted to public benefit. It is
23 not today. We have a chance to do it right.

24 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: You are 30 seconds...

25 Thank you.

2 ALEX MATTHIESSEN: Thank you.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I just want to say
4 I tried to say that, not as articulately as you when
5 I was questioning them. Thank you.

6 ALEX MATTHIESSEN: Okay, good. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you, folks, so
8 much. This panel is dismissed.

9 I'd like to call Susanne Lee, Kate
10 Maligar, Mulligan, I'm so sorry if I butchered that,
11 Mark Young, Norrice Raymaker, Roger Baron.

12 You can begin when you're ready.

13 Yeah, we're keeping a little pile of the
14 folks that aren't coming up just in case.

15 Please state your name and then read your
16 testimony.

17 MARK YOUNG: Good morning. My name is Mark
18 Young. I'm representing the South Midwood Residents
19 Association. Anybody who wants to partner with us,
20 our email address is
21 southmidwoodhelicopters@gmail.com. For some of you
22 who don't know, South Midwood is in central Brooklyn
23 just west of Flatbush Avenue near Brooklyn College,
24 and we have the good fortune to be right under one of
25 the two primary routes of helicopters from Manhattan

2 to JFK Airport along with many other communities in
3 Brooklyn. As you've heard, every day we have
4 repeatedly helicopters flying at 500 feet or
5 sometimes less right over our homes, our businesses,
6 and our public spaces. Something really must be done
7 to address this issue. We join all of our partners
8 here today in support of the bills focusing on the
9 City-owned heliports, but the main reason we're here
10 today It's just to make it clear to the Council
11 Members and others that the proposals that only focus
12 on the City-operated heliports do not have much of an
13 impact on the communities in South Middlewood and
14 most of your constituents in Brooklyn. The fact of
15 the matter is the vast majority of the helicopters
16 that fly over our neighborhoods are from the West
17 30th Street Heliport that you've heard about before
18 that is owned by the Hudson River Park Trust. If
19 you're a Brooklyn Member of the City Council, you
20 really need to work with your constituents to
21 pressure the Hudson River Park Trust board, who are
22 appointees of the Governor, the Mayor, and the
23 Manhattan Borough President to rethink how they
24 choose to utilize their open space. The irony is not
25 lost on me and us that the Hudson River Trust

2 mission, what it is, and it's actually sponsoring a
3 heliport that produces so much environmental negative
4 impact on the community. The first step, and I'll
5 wrap up, the first step and the main point we want to
6 make is we want you to join Council Member Brewer in
7 support of the legislation, Resolution 226, that
8 focuses on the State Legislature and to call on them
9 to amend the Hudson River Trust Park Act by banning
10 non-helicopter use at that airport. Thank you.

11 SUSANNE LEE: Hello, my name is Susanne
12 Lee, and I represent Hudson Classical Theatre
13 Company. We are a non-profit theatre company that has
14 performed in Riverside Park for the past 20 years. We
15 perform on the north patio of the Soldiers and
16 Sailors Monument in Riverside Park on West 89th and
17 Riverside Drive. We produce three full summer
18 productions, each running one month long in June,
19 July, and August. We offer these plays to the public
20 and don't charge tickets. As we are an outdoor
21 theater company, the helicopter traffic that crosses
22 overhead over the monument has been a long-running
23 problem and seems to be getting worse with every
24 passing year. The noise is deafening and we have to
25 stop our show and wait for the helicopters to pass.

2 One evening, we decided to count the number of
3 helicopters that flew overhead during one of our
4 shows, and the number was 24 helicopters. This is
5 from one Sunday evening from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. It
6 is extremely difficult to perform with this nonstop
7 helicopter traffic, and it is such a terrible
8 disservice to the roughly 3,000 audience members who
9 come to our shows every summer. They come from all
10 five boroughs, the tri-state area, and we often get
11 national and international tourists, all excited to
12 see an outdoor summer show, only to have the
13 experience marred by the nonstop disturbance of the
14 helicopters. It is also a huge disturbance to the
15 roughly 100 people who work with us every summer from
16 actors, directors, costume designers, artists, and
17 production teams who work so hard on every show, only
18 to suffer through the increasing noise of the
19 helicopters that just disrupt every production. We
20 sincerely hope something can be done about this
21 helicopter traffic before we began our 21st season of
22 producing classical theater in Riverside Park this
23 summer. Thank you for your time.

24 NORRICE RAYMAKER: Hi. I'm Norrice
25 Raymaker, and I am from Jersey City, New Jersey, and

2 I have lived there for 30 years, and I want to thank
3 you so much for your legislation, for sponsoring and
4 writing this legislation because you are paving the
5 way for New Jersey. Know that our elected officials
6 and the residents in Hudson County support your
7 legislation. Non-essential helicopters, of course,
8 are ruining our quality of life. We are subjected to
9 tourist, commuter, and charter helicopter traffic
10 that flies over or to New York City, to JFK, to
11 Newark, LaGuardia, and Long Island. We cannot enjoy
12 our parks. Our homes, they vibrate, and the noise is
13 heard inside and outside. It's very disturbing. You
14 cannot have a conversation with people when you're on
15 the street and the helicopters are flying over. They
16 fly over our schools. They fly over our places of
17 worship. They fly over Hoboken. They disrupt learning
18 and services. It also impacts our enjoyment of New
19 York City. Last summer, I was at Lincoln Center and I
20 saw and heard helicopters hovering over Central Park,
21 and New York City is a world class city, but unlike
22 Paris and London which have banned helicopter
23 traffic, helicopter corporations here continue to
24 degrade our beautiful New York City, the New York
25 Harbor, Ellis Island, and Governors Island, Liberty

2 State Park, the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn and
3 Washington Bridges, and other sacred metropolitan
4 landmarks. It's ironic that we have banned plastic
5 bags in New Jersey, but our hands are seemingly tied
6 when it comes to banning non-essential helicopters.
7 We have legislation in committee at the State level
8 that has not made it to the floor. We have been
9 advised that federal legislation will solve the
10 helicopter problem, but that too has not advanced so
11 you have a unique opportunity to dramatically reduce
12 non-essential helicopters, and I'm urging you,
13 please, take the opportunity to regulate non-
14 essential helicopter traffic in the greater New York
15 City area. We are indebted to you. Thank you.

16 KATE MADIGAN: Good afternoon. My name is
17 Kate Madigan from The Public Theater. I just want to
18 note, it's interesting that the previous panels were
19 talking about using instruments to measure sound
20 pollution, but they weren't talking about human ears
21 and that was very interesting to me. The increase in
22 helicopter usage and noise directly impacts the
23 quality of life for many New Yorkers. Every summer,
24 tens of thousands of New Yorkers experience this
25 disruption at the Delacorte Theater during

2 performances of Free Shakespeare in the Park. After
3 having waited hours in line for free tickets,
4 thousands of New Yorkers settle into their seats to
5 experience Free Shakespeare in the Park, only to have
6 their experience disrupted by helicopters hovering
7 overhead. Passengers and pilots require ear
8 protections. However, the average citizen isn't
9 prepared to carry around noise-canceling aviation
10 headsets. Additionally, helicopters make more noise
11 when turning compared to flying straight as the
12 change of direction alters the air vortices around
13 the blades. Therefore, any helicopter that circles
14 around the open air Delacorte Theater in Central Park
15 during nightly performances maximizes noise
16 pollution, aka, sound signatures. The Public Theater
17 has actively been working on this issue at every
18 level of government. The organization is currently
19 seeking congressional support for a federal study
20 that would illuminate the impact of helicopter
21 operations over New York City. Thankfully,
22 Congressman Nadler's staff has listened to our
23 quality-of-life concerns. We hope the federal
24 government conducts this study with human ears in
25 order to inform policy makers at the city, state, and

2 federal level to the challenges facing communities.

3 We welcome the proposals of Introductions 0026, 27,

4 and 70 restricting non-essential helicopter

5 operations over New York City. It is essential to

6 improving the quality of life. Please reach out to

7 our team with any further questions, support with

8 research points. Thank you, Chair Farías, Council

9 Members, Committee Counsel, and Staff for your work

10 on this topic. The Public Theater appreciates your

11 leadership.

12 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Just in time. Thank

13 you so much.

14 If you can hold one second, Council

15 Member Brewer has a question.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I have a question.

17 I know we've been talking to Phil Cohen a lot, your

18 colleague. We've done so many press conferences with

19 New York and New Jersey, and I appreciate it on this

20 topic. Are there any localities, because I know

21 what's going on in the state, but are there any

22 localities in Jersey that have passed any bans,

23 because you have a major number of those doorless

24 that fly pretty constantly because I've been in them

25 so I know.

2 NORRICE RAYMAKER: Hudson County itself,
3 at the county level, passed resolutions in favor of
4 the New Jersey state legislation. Jersey City also
5 passed a resolution, Hoboken passed a resolution so
6 we do support the reduction of, or the elimination
7 really, of non-essential helicopters. We just are
8 struggling to figure out how to make it effective.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
10 much.

11 NORRICE RAYMAKER: You're welcome.

12 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you, folks.
13 This panel is now dismissed.

14 I'd now like to call up David McConnell,
15 Diane Park, Dorothy Lyon, Brenda Quattrini, and James
16 Harrington.

17 Whenever you're ready to begin.

18 DIANE PARK: Hello, I'm Diane Park from
19 Waterside Plaza. Any action or legislation to
20 restrict or eliminate helicopters must also include
21 the extremely dangerous seaplanes that are taking off
22 from and landing in the East River and docking at the
23 Skyport Marina on East 25th Street in Manhattan, also
24 City-owned. My husband and I personally witnessed a
25 seaplane heading straight towards our window before

2 it veered off. Seaplanes are not regulated or
3 monitored by air traffic control. Pilots visually
4 land and take off in the river at their own
5 discretion, making seaplanes extremely dangerous.
6 Skyport Marina, where the seaplane stock first opened
7 in 1939, the riverfront and the river have changed
8 significantly since 1939. Waterside Plaza wasn't
9 built nor was the nearby United Nations school nor
10 the British International School. There were no high
11 rises along the river in Brooklyn and Queens in 1939
12 as there are today, nor were there the full fleet of
13 ferries and party boats and barges and everything
14 else going up and down the river. With all of this
15 activity and the residential buildup along both sides
16 of the river, seaplanes are taking off and landing on
17 a small strip of water between two bridges in a
18 congested residential community. It is no longer safe
19 or appropriate for these planes to be taking off and
20 landing in the river at this location. These planes
21 are an accident waiting to happen. What are even the
22 rules for these seaplanes? Can they take off and land
23 within 50 feet of residential buildings? Can they
24 take off and land right next to schools? Are multiple
25 planes permitted to circle in the river while they're

2 waiting to dock at the marina? How many planes are
3 permitted to take off and land on any given day? Can
4 they take off during storms, after dark. Can they fly
5 dangerously close to the con Edison power point or
6 fly dangerously close to the Williamsburg and
7 Queensborough Bridges? I have witnessed all of these
8 violations myself along with my neighbors. Something
9 needs to be done about these seaplanes. Thank you. I
10 just want to bring to your attention I attached
11 several photos.

12 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: I was going through
13 them.

14 DIANE PARK: Okay, good. That show these
15 planes in action. It's unbelievable.

16 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you for your
17 testimony and for the stockpile of photos that you
18 submitted.

19 DOROTHY LYON: Okay. Hi, my name is
20 Dorothy Lyon, and I live in Brooklyn Heights across
21 the East River from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport.
22 Over the last two years, the number of helicopters
23 landing and taking off from the heliport has
24 increased dramatically. The noise from the
25 helicopters can often be heard in my living room to

2 the extent that I cannot accomplish anything
3 productive. There is no place in my apartment to
4 escape the noise. The loud sound of reverberating
5 helicopter blades is especially bad in Brooklyn
6 Bridge Park. I've watched from the park as
7 helicopters have landed and taken off from the
8 heliport every four to five minutes in the afternoon.
9 The helicopter traffic starts to increase around 2
10 p.m. and will last until about 7 p.m. Weekends are
11 even worse as the helicopters begin their flights
12 earlier in the day. The only time they don't fly is
13 when it is rainy and or windy out. It doesn't matter
14 whether the choppers are flying over the park or the
15 river. The sound is still really loud. It is hard to
16 enjoy being in the park with this overwhelming
17 racket, and I would say these seem to be mainly
18 commuter flights because I'm watching them, and they
19 are heading off towards JFK or over South Brooklyn or
20 heading down to Newark so, to me, I'm not sure
21 they're tourist flights. To me, they seem to be more
22 commuter flights, and it's just overwhelming. I would
23 just say that I fully support the bills and
24 resolutions before the City Council, but I would
25 actually say the number of commuter helicopters to

2 area airports needs to be sharply reduced, and I
3 actually would like to see the DMH used only for
4 emergency purposes. Thank you.

5 BRENDA QUATTRINI: Hello, my name is
6 Brenda Quattrini. Non-essential helicopters have been
7 flying right above the area where I live in Astoria,
8 Queens on a daily basis from early morning to late at
9 night for several years now. These outdated,
10 polluting, incredibly loud objects feel entitled to
11 interrupt any common human action like having a
12 conversation in the apartment or focus on studying
13 and working just to transport few privileged people
14 to and from the Hamptons so the measured decibel
15 levels on a helicopter flying over my apartment
16 ranges between 78 to 86, which are considered
17 dangerous for the human year, and I have observed how
18 even birds and other terrestrial animals display a
19 disoriented behavior while these obnoxious objects
20 fly over them, and to add the amount of pollution
21 spread above our heads and right into our lungs is
22 unacceptable, especially when the air quality is
23 already affected by a long list of other pollutants
24 like traffic, factory fumes, and the thousands of
25 daily flights approaching JFK and LaGuardia. Some of

2 the comments from the noise complaints RightAvenues'
3 app stated, for example, why has the city allowed
4 these helicopters to take over our airspace? It's
5 dangerous, bad for the environment, and detrimental
6 to human mental and physical health. Please make it
7 stop circling the East River near downtown Brooklyn
8 on and off all day, still going at 9:15 p.m. 400 ft.
9 Sounds like an invasion. It's so loud. 11:30 p.m.
10 Tourist rides. Can we get no peace. Incredibly loud.
11 It's going to wake our child. This doesn't happen
12 over other metropolises, not even Disney World. I'm
13 in a constant state of alert here. Unfortunately, New
14 York City is letting its citizen's mental and
15 physical health deteriorate day after day by allowing
16 these non-essential flights to harass them on a daily
17 basis. I don't want to be forced to move out of the
18 city like many others have done already. The City of
19 New York needs to take a stand and protect its
20 residents' health. That's why we agree to pay taxes
21 to both New York State and New York City. Thank you.

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Hi. Thank you for inviting
23 me and listening to my concerns regarding helicopter
24 noise and its constant aggravation. I took the
25 liberty of sending a 10-second video audio clip of my

2 visit recently to the Brooklyn Botanic Japanese
3 Garden to you, which was marred by the intrusion of,
4 what else, helicopters. I hope you had a chance to
5 peruse it. I'm not a priest, far from it, but simply
6 put, God does not dwell in turbulence, and there is
7 nothing more turbulent than helicopters. The ability
8 for us as caring people to practice human compassion
9 is compromised in an environment where the spirit is
10 stilled by a constant barrage of worldly intrusion.
11 The arrogance of helicopters is an especially galling
12 example of man's indifference to his fellow man. It
13 breeds contempt on both sides, by those who selfishly
14 ignore their fellow citizens right to a calm,
15 peaceful, daily existence, and the hateful scorn felt
16 by us, subjected to helicopters' daily torture. This
17 is New York City, and noise is a byproduct of living
18 in it, but there are limits to what is acceptable and
19 necessary. The impatient driver stuck in a traffic
20 jam who keeps his hand on the horn to no avail is
21 frustrated, but this is an everyday part of living in
22 New York City. It must be tolerated. Helicopters, on
23 the other hand, are of a different magnitude
24 altogether. They are equivalent to an invasive
25 species out to destroy our very existence, serving no

2 discernible purpose other than gratifying the whims
3 of a few. Where's the time go? I have to tell you I
4 can remember a time when the Lower Manhattan Heliport
5 was only used by like the President or the Pope,
6 maybe Frank Sinatra, I don't know. I remember Mayor
7 Bloomberg, a licensed helicopter pilot, can I repeat
8 that, Mayor Bloomberg, a licensed helicopter pilot,
9 opened up the floodgates. It all came from him, and
10 you have a chance to rectify that mistake. It's in
11 your capability to do that, and I certainly hope you
12 do that. Thank you for your time.

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you for your
14 testimony. Thank you all.

15 I'd like to call up Mark Berman, Ana
16 Rodriguez, Monica Elias, Christine Collister, and
17 Theo Morton.

18 You can begin when you're ready.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: Is it on? Can you hear me?
20 Okay. This is a screenshot of a helicopter flying
21 over my apartment in Park Slope at approximately 50
22 feet above my building. According to the FAA's
23 reports, and I'm shocked to hear the DEP say they
24 don't know how to measure sounds. It's quite
25 extraordinary because Alexander Bell measured

2 decibels over 100 years ago, and the FAA in a report
3 called Aircraft Source Noise Measurement Studies puts
4 the Bell 407 that was flying over my apartment at 110
5 decibels at 200 feet. At 50 feet, it's over 120, the
6 sound of a jet engine. Now, I want to speak to a
7 couple of things that the EDC testified about, and
8 one of the things I want to say that I'm shocked that
9 is not a part of this, I've owned my own business in
10 New York for about 37 years. I have an apartment in
11 Park Slope, Brooklyn. I have an office in Lower
12 Manhattan. I can't focus, I can't concentrate. There
13 is apparently no evaluation of the loss to New York
14 City the massive economic loss to the hundreds of
15 thousands of people like me that are losing
16 productivity, people who are having to lose days from
17 sickness from these deafening sounds. I think it's
18 enormous. I've paid lots of UBT tax over the years.
19 I've paid lots of state and city tax. The other thing
20 I did want to speak to is this mythological thing of
21 the electronic helicopters. When they did that, and
22 there were some reports of the people who were
23 present at NASA when these were done and these tests
24 were done, and what they revealed was that these
25 helicopters flying at 300 feet produce a sound of the

2 equivalent of someone standing on a street sidewalk
3 next to a highway with cars going by 50 miles an
4 hour. There's plans to, from United, others to turn
5 this into, I'm sorry, I will just wrap it up and turn
6 this into a taxi lane across Brooklyn and Lower
7 Manhattan, which is going to make huge swaths of the
8 city unlivable. I heard the gentleman from the
9 helicopter industry talk about 1,500 feet. These
10 things are not flying at 1,500 feet. They're flying
11 at 200 to 500 feet over our apartments, which is
12 creating sounds. If it's electronic, it's also going
13 to be unlivable. And I just want to quickly say I
14 testified here two years ago. Nothing has happened.
15 The State Legislature by large majorities passed to
16 shut down the heliport. Governor Hochul vetoed that
17 for the false reason that that's the FAA, and it's
18 not true at all. The State had absolute control to
19 shut that down, and it's unfortunate because this is
20 impacting toddlers and children, infants, seniors,
21 the disabled, people throughout New York City. It's
22 got to stop, and I appreciate your efforts to do so.

23 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Thank you so much.

24 ANA MARIA JOMOLCA: Thank you. Hi, my name
25 is Ana Maria Jomolca, and I live in downtown

2 Brooklyn. I'm an actress, and the only reason I say
3 that is because in this new landscape where
4 everything's being brought home, we have to tape now
5 from home, auditions and, needless to say, I have
6 gone from not in the route of the flight path to in
7 the route and there are helicopters coming. I have to
8 tape and when you hit that spot where you actually
9 nailed an audition and a freaking helicopter comes by
10 and ruins it for you, that's a lot of work but, aside
11 from that, I wanted to bring up something that, aside
12 from the noise pollution is the sky, the skyline
13 pollution. I have actually muted myself and just
14 looked at all the helicopters. At one point, I was
15 down in the Brooklyn Bridge Park, which used to be my
16 respite and my solace and my pause because we as a
17 city are in relationship with everybody, especially
18 in such a tight, congested area. What happens when we
19 are piled up, everyone here has been imagining in a
20 relationship, things get heated, you're in each
21 other's faces, pause, space, a breath, a moment away,
22 the parks, the botanic gardens, that's what that is
23 for the city. It helps us come back to a more clear,
24 a more sane way to deal with the situation but,
25 unfortunately, sanity is not thought of as profit or

2 tax deductible but it is crucial, and I feel like
3 that is not being, when did that stop becoming a
4 value, especially in a city? Our sanity is
5 everything, especially right now with what's going on
6 in the world. We need these places to go and
7 recalibrate and come back and deal with something in
8 a sane manner, and that's been taken away by these
9 helicopters so thank you.

10 CHRISTINE COLLISTER: My name is Christine
11 Collister. I work and live in Gramercy along with my
12 husband and our 8-year-old daughter. Over the last
13 four years, helicopter noise across Manhattan has
14 increased at an alarming rate. Prior to 2021, I felt
15 surprised every time one passed overhead and assumed
16 there was a criminal or news story nearby. A rare
17 occurrence, I heard far less than one per day. So far
18 this month, I've heard at least 10 per day, or 150 in
19 total for the month. Last week, my daughter and I
20 visited Central Park for a picnic lunch. In the short
21 time we sat in the grass, two different helicopters
22 slowly passed overhead 30 minutes apart. Yesterday, I
23 took a ride on the Hudson River bike path, during
24 which I heard at least two. As I sit here writing
25 this, I hear one through my open window. As early as

2 7 a.m., helicopters crisscross over our apartment.
3 Each time, my shoulders tense up, my blood pressure
4 goes up, I scramble to play music to drown out the
5 sound, the rest of the day is an uphill battle to
6 combat stress. My family should not have to suffer
7 through this so someone else can gawk down on the
8 city like an exhibition or charter a helicopter for a
9 visit to their vacation home. There are many
10 emergency or unavoidable noises that New Yorkers
11 endure including ambulance, police and fire sirens,
12 jackhammering, and the never-ending sound of building
13 construction. On top of that, a symphony of car
14 horns, and yet we're also experiencing non-essential
15 and recreational helicopters overhead. Today, I asked
16 my 8-year-old daughter if she thought the onslaught
17 of helicopters was normal. She said, of course it's
18 not normal, Mom, they're so loud. Yet, here I am,
19 forced to argue against what is obvious to an 8-year-
20 old and an obvious breach to every New Yorker's
21 quality of life. Pulled directly from NYC.gov on a
22 page simply entitled Noise, Noise in the community,
23 even at levels that are too low to cause hearing
24 loss, can affect mental and physical health. Long
25 term exposure to this type of noise can lead to

2 stress, higher blood pressure, muscle tension,
3 fatigue, and sleep problems. Those side effects are
4 demonstrable and in the long-term lead to further
5 health consequences including an increased risk of
6 heart attack and stroke. I urge everyone who has a
7 say in this matter to think about the health of
8 families like mine who live directly in the
9 crosshairs of persistent, rickety, non-essential
10 helicopter flights and put a stop to them. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: I appreciate all of
12 you for your testimony.

13 I'd now like to call up Michael Popper,
14 David Fitzgerald, John Young, and Jason Ehrich.

15 No? Okay, I'll give it one more round.
16 Michael Popper, David Fitzgerald, John Young, Jason
17 Ehrich and, if not, Moonira Keghida. You can come up.
18 Charles Komanoff, John Ost, James Boyd.

19 Yes, you can begin when you're ready.

20 JASON EHRICH: Okay, my name is Jason
21 Ehrich, and I'm not affiliated with a particular
22 organization though I appreciate their advocacy that
23 I've seen here as well as the Council's leadership on
24 this issue. I'm simply a resident of downtown
25 Brooklyn who has seen the incredible development of

2 the Brooklyn waterfront over the last 15 years so
3 it's a mystery to me that the City would allow this
4 triumph of urban planning to be marred with near
5 constant noise pollution. It is also a mystery to me
6 that the EDC and Mayoral Administration is so
7 transparently obstructionist to reform. The DEP
8 representative's assertion that noise monitoring
9 technology does not exist can be disproven with a
10 one-minute Google search, and I can send along other
11 vendors that supply this technology if the Council
12 would like. I guess their attitude can be summed up
13 as New Yorkers can and will put up with it. They do
14 every day, so why shouldn't they put up with this?
15 But the fact of the matter is we shouldn't have to.
16 What is happening is not right, and it's not fair,
17 and New Yorkers will notice where their politicians
18 stand on this issue. Thanks again for the Council's
19 leadership.

20 MOONIRA KEGHIDA: Good afternoon. My name
21 is Moonira Keghida. I live in Boreham Hill which is
22 about a 10-minute walk from the water's edge, and I
23 am here today just as a resident who's extremely
24 nervous all day because of this sound, but also I
25 wanted to speak on behalf of the people of the

2 Wyckoff and Gowanus Housing Projects, NYSHA. I live
3 in the shadows of these two projects. I live across
4 the street and let me say that we're a 10-minute walk
5 from the water's edge so you can imagine how quickly
6 a helicopter reaches overhead. They fly very low over
7 the water and, by the time they get to these
8 projects, they are not very high. They fly so
9 extremely low, it's just above people's heads, and I
10 have clocked it. They start at 7:40 every day, the
11 particular company that's flying over our area, 7:40
12 every day. On a good day, I've clocked it at every 20
13 minutes. Every 20 minutes, a helicopter is either
14 going to Manhattan or coming from Manhattan, every 20
15 minutes until about 8 p.m. Last night, the last one
16 came in at 9:40. Now if you restrict the hours of
17 flying, all I anticipate is going to happen, we'll
18 have them coming every 10 minutes. It is so unfair.
19 Let me say something else. Noise, of course, is a
20 huge problem, but also our health. A child in our
21 building was found to have high lead blood content.
22 The pediatrician said it's pretty normal for city
23 kids, but we had a child two doors down die of a
24 brain cancer recently, which I hear is on the uptick
25 also, brain cancer. Probably coming from the lead

2 content. This was a 5-year-old child. A million
3 dollars is spent on gasoline I heard from the
4 heliports. That million dollars is being dumped on
5 our heads, and we're getting cancer from it. Okay,
6 that's all I wanted to say. Thanks.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: You folks might have
8 to shift a little. There you go.

9 JOHN OST: Good afternoon. My name is John
10 Ost, and I see noise rates high on the number of
11 complaints to the City's 3-1-1 complaint line. I have
12 served on the Board of Directors of Southbridge
13 Towers, a 1,600-unit housing cooperative with almost
14 5,000 residents, located in the South Street Seaport
15 area. Diagonally across from us is Smith Houses, a
16 1,900-unit NYCHA housing complex with almost 6,000
17 residents. As you can imagine, noise is high on our
18 priority list, especially sirens, whoophorns, and
19 helicopters. Many of us survived the 9/11 World Trade
20 Center bombing when helicopters flew overhead
21 constantly so helicopters present a very stressful
22 reminder of the past. I avoid going to the seaport
23 and over on the west side of Manhattan, I also avoid
24 as the noise is just too disruptive. As I was
25 preparing for this hearing on April 9th at 9:20 a.m.,

2 an NYPD helicopter flying over the Brooklyn Bridge
3 near South Street Seaport and, since I live on the
4 27th floor, I noticed that the helicopter was at eye
5 level, way too low for those walking in the street,
6 and NYPD helicopters burn fuel at the rate of 460
7 dollars per hour as well as discharge air pollution.
8 NYPD aircraft regularly fly and hover over both of
9 our developments, both Smith and Southbridge. In
10 addition to the very unpleasantness helicopter brings
11 us, we also have the emergency vehicle horns so we're
12 constantly being disturbed in Lower Manhattan. I and
13 my residents in Southbridge Towers greatly appreciate
14 the Council taking these particular legislative
15 moves. Thank you.

16 DAVID FITZGERALD: Hello, my name is David
17 Fitzgerald, and I represent the Fitzgerald family in
18 Marine Park, Brooklyn. First of all, I'd like to say
19 I actually love helicopters. Personally, I really,
20 really do. I am an aviation enthusiast. I build and
21 fly model planes. I fly drones. I've flown private
22 aircraft. I absolutely love them, but I also know the
23 noise that they make, right, and the helicopter is
24 one of the noisiest flying machines ever invented.
25 Not very efficient and very noisy so I'm just going

2 to tell you how the machines that I actually love to
3 watch from a distance, as long as it's not too noisy,
4 affect me. Noise has never bothered me that much
5 before, but I'm more than 60 years old and noises
6 seem to bother me a little bit more lately. I don't
7 know why, but especially those helicopter noises so
8 my real complaints and what driving the noise
9 complaints for me and where I live is the altitude.
10 Helicopters are flying over my house. Because I'm an
11 aviation enthusiast, I track ADS-B data, which is the
12 transponder the helicopters use which will display
13 their flight data, where they're going, how high they
14 are, regularly between 120 and 350 feet above my
15 house. I see them take off on Manhattan, climb to 900
16 feet, and then slowly descend as they cross Brooklyn.
17 Unfortunately, I live about half a block from
18 Flatbush Avenue, and that's the route they use to go
19 from Manhattan to Kennedy Airport. I wanted to call
20 out one or two things that some of the earlier folks
21 said, the helicopter industry representatives. I was
22 hoping I could get to go earlier because I wanted to
23 look them in the face when I said this. The lady
24 mentioned about IFR helicopter flights. For those of
25 you who, if you don't know, is flight in limited or

2 zero visibility. Right now, that's the only respite
3 we get is when there are IFR conditions. If they
4 allow flight in IFR conditions, we'll have double the
5 helicopter traffic that we currently have here in New
6 York City. I just want to finish by telling you that
7 people who, I've personally contacted to deal with
8 this condition, 3-1-1, multiple times, me and my
9 neighbors, Hakeem Jeffries, my Congressman, waste of
10 time. The FAA in Farmingdale. No answer. We'll call
11 you back. Never called me back. FAA in Washington,
12 D.C. Wasted my time. Uber Air, Blade Mobility, and
13 the others responsible for all that commuter
14 helicopters, and they are the ones directly
15 responsible for the increase in helicopter traffic.
16 It's the air mobility apps that are originating in
17 Downtown Heliport and on the West 13th Street
18 Heliport. They're the number one driver of the
19 increase in helicopter traffic.

20 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you.

21 DAVID FITZGERALD: Thank you. Oh, thank
22 you for your work, by the way. I appreciate it, 100
23 percent.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Is it on now? Yeah. Thank
25 you for your stamina, by the way, and also your

2 public stamina. I'm sorry to see that some of your
3 panel has left, and I'm sorry to see that the
4 industry shills and the EDC have left because they're
5 unbelievable. I live in Chelsea. I commute every day
6 by bike up to Hell's Kitchen, past the heliport in
7 the park, the egregiously named Very Important
8 Persons heliport from which the Trust makes revenue,
9 which they consider necessary which is really pimping
10 our health and safety, but I don't want to repeat all
11 the complaints that everybody's made because I agree
12 with it completely. I'm alarmed at the endorsement
13 and the enthusiasm about electric helicopters because
14 electric transportation, I'm sorry, is not going to
15 be an answer to climate change. We're two miles out
16 from an environmental trainwreck and electric public
17 transportation, absolutely, but private
18 transportation and especially helicopters, which are
19 used exclusively by wealth, whether they're
20 corporate, business, or private, the problem with
21 electric vehicles is that the production and the
22 materials are carbon intensive, they depend on being
23 charged from fossil fuel plants. More terrifying are
24 the environmental and human rights issues involved
25 with the extremely toxic mining of battery raw

2 material. Most of us are not aware that cobalt and
3 lithium mining are becoming a neocolonial nightmare
4 for poor populations, re-enacting the pillage of oil
5 extraction and involving child slavery, deadly wage
6 slavery, and devastating pollution. Let's not waste
7 our labor, our health, and our innovation, and our
8 children's lives on the deadly privileges wealth
9 demands. Thank you for your work.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Thank you folks so
11 much for your testimony. This panel is dismissed.

12 I'd now like to call up Philip Turner,
13 John Wilkens, Sydney Garcia Widgren, and Christopher
14 Widgren.

15 You can begin when you're ready.

16 PHILIP TURNER: Thank you, Council
17 Members. Gale Brewer was my Council Member for a long
18 time. Now Shaun Abreu is, and I'm glad to have them
19 both. I know how long Gale's worked on this issue.
20 Helicopters fly over my Upper West Side neighborhood
21 near Riverside Park day and night. This morning, I
22 got up earlier than usual. It was 6:25. There was
23 already a helicopter flying near me. It just mars our
24 quality of life so much. I ride my bike along the
25 Cherry Walk along the Hudson River. Recently one ride

2 I counted six flights in 15 minutes, low-flying. They
3 were terrible.

4 UNIDENTIFIED ZOOM PANELIST: City
5 University of New York...

6 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Can you stop the
7 clock for a second?

8 Go ahead.

9 PHILIP TURNER: I'm sorry. I don't even
10 know if I need my full two minutes because I've heard
11 so many eloquent people speak this morning. I was
12 disturbed by the minimizing of this problem by the
13 industry officials and the ill-preparedness of the
14 Members of the Administration, which really
15 disappointed me so thank you for everything you're
16 doing. I don't need my full two minutes because we
17 all know the truth.

18 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: A true hero. Thank
19 you so much.

20 JOHN WILKENS: Hi, (cough) excuse me,
21 sorry, my allergies. I'm John Wilkens, I live with my
22 family in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

23 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Is the mic on? You
24 see the red light?

25 JOHN WILKENS: Is it on?

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Click the button.

3 There you go. No?

4 JOHN WILKENS: There.

5 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yeah. Okay.

6 JOHN WILKENS: Sorry. I'll be brief. I'm
7 John Wilkins. I live in Park Slope, Brooklyn with my
8 family, and I just want to thank the Council for all
9 the hard work you're doing. It wasn't until today
10 that I realized that the EDC actually worked for the
11 helicopter industry. I thought they were working for
12 us. Their 28-million-dollar estimate of the economic
13 benefit of helicopters is frankly bizarre, and I hope
14 to God whoever did that math isn't doing my taxes
15 because I would have made 100 million dollars this
16 year. I live with my boy and my wife in Park Slope,
17 and I'll just relay one anecdote. This Sunday, it was
18 a nice day, all he wanted to do was sit on the stoop
19 and read a book. We grabbed Pete the Cat, his
20 favorite book, sat on the stoop. Before we were able
21 to read one little Pete the Cat story, there were
22 eight helicopters flying over, as others have said,
23 extremely low altitude, deafening not just my family,
24 but hundreds of families in each direction for dozens
25 of miles all the way to the Hamptons where we live on

2 the main drag between Manhattan and the Hamptons so
3 eight flights in 15 minutes isn't unusual. It was
4 unusual for April. It's commonplace for July
5 afternoons, Friday evenings and Saturday and Sunday
6 evenings are essentially making our neighborhood
7 uninhabitable. The economic benefit of the 28 million
8 fails to include the significant cost of the health
9 damage that the helicopters are doing, the damage to
10 real estate. Now, my neighbors and I, we're all fed
11 up. We're thinking of moving. No one wants to move.
12 We want to raise up our families in what was, a short
13 time ago, a beautiful, fantastic, vibrant
14 neighborhood that is becoming uninhabitable because
15 of the noise so thank you for all you're doing and
16 hopefully we can do something to ban these flights
17 and to turn things back to what they were.

18 CHRISTOPHER WIDGREN: My name is
19 Christopher Widgren. I live in Park Slope Prospect
20 Heights, about halfway between the Barclays Center
21 and Grand Army Plaza, right on Flatbush Avenue. I
22 thank you guys for hanging out with us so late today.
23 I work as a registered nurse down at NYU Brooklyn
24 Hospital. I was the nurse in charge of the largest
25 COVID unit in Brooklyn down at NYU Brooklyn and

2 Sunset Park. Everybody came out at Sunset and was
3 banging their pots and pans together and it was very
4 sweet, but now I'm asking for quiet because the
5 situation is just killing me lately. I don't want to
6 be here. I don't want to be hanging out at a City
7 Council meeting all day. I've never sent a dish back
8 at a restaurant or written an angry letter to a
9 business. I'm pretty cool with noise too. Sirens,
10 fine. Police helicopters, traffic helicopters, fine.
11 Horns. We live in New York. This is okay. This is a
12 whole other animal, man. I bought a little
13 decibelometer. It cost 20. Very easy to measure.
14 Don't know why they were saying it wasn't. Every 20
15 minutes, going up to 100 decibels, 90 decibels inside
16 the apartment. That's like turning on a hairdryer or
17 a blender every 20 minutes starting at 6 in the
18 morning, on Sundays sometimes. I'm just trying to get
19 some sleep. It's completely outrageous, and I don't
20 know what to do. We used to enjoy going on the roof.
21 We can't go on the roof anymore because we can't hear
22 each other. I'm happy now when it's a rainy, cloudy,
23 stormy day because we get a little bit of a break
24 from the helicopters. How sad is that? I don't know
25 what changed it. I've lived there for 10 years. It

2 didn't used to be that bad. A couple of years ago it
3 started getting bad, and then just the last six
4 months, a year, and now it's just horrible. I don't
5 know what all has changed, but I hope that we can do
6 something to just help out the people who have our
7 feet on the ground and our ordinary workers and not
8 the wealthy people who are getting out to the
9 Hamptons and JFK.

10 SYDNEY GARCIA WIDGREN: Hello. My name is
11 Sydney Widgren. I live in the same place just north
12 of Prospect Park, half a block off Flatbush Avenue,
13 and I can attest also to the fact that helicopters
14 are flying very low over our building constantly,
15 almost every day, almost every 20 minutes from 7 a.m.
16 until late into the evening. We live on the first
17 floor. The sound reverberates off of the buildings
18 around us directly into our apartment, and it's
19 deafening indoors and outdoors so thank you for
20 holding this hearing and for this opportunity to talk
21 about my experience which has been unfortunately
22 quite horrible with the commuter helicopters in
23 particular.

24 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you all for
25 your testimony, and I'll be sure to relay to DEP

2 again that they can monitor. Feel free to give any
3 feedback on my bill, Intro. 27, on the decibel meters
4 as well.

5 I'd now like to call up Judy Mann, Peter
6 Maloney, Stan O'Connor, and Alan Winson, maybe?

7 Whenever you're ready.

8 JUDY MANN: Hi, I'm Judy Mann. I'm a
9 volunteer tour guide on Governor's Island, and I have
10 the privilege of working with tourists that come to
11 the island from all parts of the country, all five
12 boroughs, and all over the world. I was going to tell
13 you a lot about the island and how wonderful it is,
14 you know all that, and there's really nothing much to
15 say, except there's just two things. There's a real
16 difference on Sundays on Governor's Island when there
17 aren't tourist helicopters taking off from lower
18 Manhattan. It's radical. I used to work always on
19 Saturdays. I've stopped working on Saturdays. It is
20 intolerable because of the unending, unremitting war
21 zone that we live in, but Sundays are different. You
22 can actually have a conversation with people. You can
23 hear the birds. It will make a difference if you can
24 eliminate the tourist helicopters. I'll just conclude
25 with something that one of the international tourists

2 said to me which was how can you possibly bear it
3 here? It's just the last thing you want people to
4 think about an island that the city is investing an
5 enormous amount in to make it into just this
6 extraordinarily luscious place so thank you so much
7 for the work and for your endurance and you do a
8 great job. Thank you very much.

9 STAN O'CONNOR: I'm a tour guide too.

10 JUDY MANN: Oh... You probably have a
11 license. I'm just an island tour guide.

12 STAN O'CONNOR: Oh, yeah. Hello, Majority
13 Leader. My name is Stan O'Connor, I'm a licensed tour
14 guide. We, there are almost 10,000 licensed guides,
15 lose money every time four passengers paying 250
16 dollars each take off for a 30-minute flight. I would
17 be happy to give a half day tour for 250, but those
18 people go up in the air. We guides provide real
19 walking tours in which we take people to museums.
20 Here's my AMNH membership card. Restaurants, bars,
21 stores. Our customers spend money in the city. Tour
22 copter customers spend money on a 30-minute view that
23 creates noise over the heads of millions. When the
24 helicopter operators cry about a coming loss of jobs
25 to 175 workers, please remember that they are

2 endangering the livelihoods of 10,000 tour guides,
3 and we were here first. Economic Development should
4 support and promote real tours with real guides
5 because we want tourism income to be distributed
6 throughout the city. There's a YouTube video that
7 documents Fort Tryon Park overflights at one every
8 two minutes. The official earlier mentioned that the
9 FAA rules supersede any possible City rules. Copters
10 at the Downtown Heliport are refueled in a manner
11 that's against FAA rules, and apparently nobody
12 checks. Normally, aircraft engines are to be shut off
13 while refueling just as you shut off your car at the
14 gas station. Hot refueling with the engine running is
15 against the rules. The FAA says to avoid hot
16 refueling except when, quote, operationally necessary
17 such as in a medivac situation in which many
18 emergency flights are needed. At Pier 6, they do it
19 all the time. I have photos. Hot refueling saves
20 time, which increases the number of flights. This is
21 a tourist flight assembly line that could turn into a
22 fireball. Thank you.

23 PETER MALONEY: Thank you for giving this
24 opportunity. We've heard a lot of testimony. I have
25 to agree with even my colleagues right here because

2 I'm not going to Governors Island again. the last
3 time I was there...

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Can you just state
5 your name and address?

6 PETER MALONEY: Oh, I'm sorry. I got yeah.
7 Peter Maloney, I'm a resident of Flatbush. My
8 colleague, Mark Young from South Midwood Residents
9 Association, also spoke. I am here just to follow on
10 a lot of what everybody's been saying, but one thing
11 though, there's been a lot of focus on tourist
12 helicopters. At least for the outer boroughs, the
13 issue is commuter helicopters, and we can track it
14 there. You've heard there's tracking apps, we can
15 track it, and you can see they're Uber and they're
16 Blade helicopters, and they're flying over at the
17 height of the tourist season. They're going to JFK.
18 There could be 30 in a day, and they're flying so low
19 as you've heard before. You make a complaint. You get
20 back a form letter from the FAA. The FAA gives you
21 their guidelines, anyone can look them up. They're
22 violating at least two of the most important
23 guidelines, their height and their being able to veer
24 off in case there's an emergency. They're flying
25 right over Flatbush Avenue. It's the same path, I've

2 noticed for years, the police fly. The police need to
3 fly it, and you do that because it's line of sight.
4 You can see Flatbush Avenue all the way down to the
5 Rockaways. They fly because it's easy. Now if they
6 get the technology that allows them to fly without
7 visual line of sight, what's that going to do? I
8 think you really have to consider this is also very
9 much an environmental justice issue. I guarantee you
10 there's an undercount in the number of complaints. I
11 get tired of making the complaints. I have to stop
12 working. I'm working inside, and I can't make a phone
13 call from inside my house. I have to stop the phone
14 call. How many complaints are you going to make in a
15 day? It takes about five or ten minutes and you have
16 to fill out everything on the complaint so it's
17 undercounted, especially in the outer boroughs where
18 a lot of people aren't going to have the means to
19 make complaints, and they need to follow their
20 altitude restrictions, and they're not following
21 them.

22 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Absolutely. Thank you
23 for your testimony.

24

25

2 Just for clarification for you, our bills
3 that are being heard today do cover both, all non-
4 essential, so it's both the commuter and the tourist.

5 PETER MALONEY: Yeah, and I think that
6 resolution is the only one that's going to help
7 somebody in the outer boroughs because, otherwise,
8 and you have to get at the EDC, that's the hard part.

9 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Yeah.

10 PETER MALONEY: It's like how do..

11 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: We're working on it.

12 PETER MALONEY: There's more money coming
13 in from other sources.

14 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: For sure. Thank you
15 so much again, folks, for your testimony.

16 Seeing no one else signed up, if you're
17 here to testify in person and have not been called,
18 please go to the Sergeant desk and fill out a form.

19 We will now move to our online testimony.
20 I'd like to call on Arlene Lillian Bronsart, Bronsapt
21 (phonetic) followed by Debra Lapadula, Dorinne Tye,
22 Mark Diller, Michael McCready, and Sam Pesin.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

24 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Arlene, you can begin
25 when you are ready and unmute yourself.

2 ARLENE BRONZAFT: Oh, okay. I just lost
3 it. I lost it. I'm so sorry. I clicked it. Oh.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: We can hear you. You
5 can begin.

6 ARLENE BRONZAFT: Can you hear me? All
7 right. Arlene Bron...

8 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Oh, we've lost
9 Arlene.

10 Okay, we're going to move to Debra
11 Lapadula or Capitula? Lapitula?

12 DEBRA LAPADULA: Hi, good afternoon. My
13 name is Debra Lapadula, and I thank you for all that
14 you do, especially Gale Brewer. I'm calling from
15 Queens. I think there was only one other person from
16 Queens Astoria, but I'm calling from Howard Beach,
17 Lindenwood, which we are the backyard of JFK. It is a
18 true nightmare here of Blade, the non-essential
19 helicopters. We have high rise condos, co-ops in this
20 area. We have a high population of birds also. They
21 start at 7:01 a.m., flying extremely low. It doesn't
22 matter what the weather is like, even the day that
23 the earthquake took place, they were flying before,
24 during the earthquake, and after, and this is a true
25 quality of life for many here, health-wise, but no

2 one is also addressing structural damages on
3 buildings and homes. We have homes here in the area
4 that are under local law construction and, with these
5 helicopters flying at the same time, this here could
6 possibly cause a disaster in this neighborhood. I
7 don't understand why for all these years, I have been
8 trying to have ears listen to me since 2016, calling
9 on differing Congress, my City Council Woman from my
10 District has no interest in this whatsoever. She will
11 not participate. She told me this is a business, and
12 we just have to accept it, maybe wear earplugs, and
13 that's unacceptable. It also is affecting veterans
14 who suffer from PTSD. They feel like they're back at
15 war. This is unfair of the torture that we're bearing
16 for selfish people who want to zip across the skies
17 for seven minutes of their flight for 200 dollars,
18 and we have to bear each and every day. You go to
19 house of worship, a funeral, a wedding, just a
20 regular Sunday service.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time is expired.
22 Thank you.

23 DEBRA LAPADULA: So I'm hoping that this
24 can see soon and change their paths.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much for
3 testifying today and waiting patiently virtually.

4 DEBRA LAPADULA: And one last thing, can I
5 add is maybe a sound can be done. There's numerous 3-
6 1-1 complaints made for 11414. You can look them up,
7 and we need someone to survey this area and have a
8 sound monitor. It is unbearable, unbearable. Thank
9 you. Have a good day.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much.
11 I'd now like to call on Dorinne Tye.

12 DORINNE TYE: Good morning, good afternoon
13 your time. I am on the other coast, and I live in a
14 small rural farm community. Sorry, my name is Dorinne
15 Tye. I live in a small rural farm community where
16 flight school moved in and became one of the largest
17 helicopter training schools in the Pacific Northwest.
18 Our rural lifestyle, livestock, and health is being
19 crushed by flight schools and helicopter training
20 exceeding 85 decibels up to 16 hours a day. It
21 appears FAA's Part 91 describes two to 500 flight
22 hours required to become a helicopter tour pilot with
23 extra hours required per type. When I see upwards of
24 20 helicopters over your community at a time, I
25 wonder who suffered those 4,000 to 10,000 hours of

2 insufferable training over our homes, health, and
3 lives only to come torture your communities
4 indefinitely. Flight school can cost more than a
5 doctorate degree. For the past decade, ALPA, the
6 largest pilot union in the world, continues saying
7 that there is no pilot shortage, including February
8 5th article titled 2023 Shatters Another Record for
9 U.S. Pilot Production. It would appear the pilot
10 shortage narrative is simply an aviation lobby
11 talking point, making a greedy few unprecedented
12 profit while indenturing students and graduates by
13 equipping them for a flooded pilot market, driving
14 down wages while creating ever more communities,
15 enduring hellish pilot training, touring, and an
16 aviation lobby which continues finding ever more ways
17 to utilize these certificates, like flying by the
18 dozens over New York or national parks or mass
19 distributing biocides, wild horse roundups, wildlife
20 culling, etc. Thank you for acknowledging the
21 aviation noise and pollutions drive down education
22 while driving up violence, hypertension, and heart
23 attacks, true physical and mental suffering and
24 torture. It seems unconscionable and unconstitutional
25 for the FAA to continue delays while sacrificing

2 wildlife, nature, ecosystems, and human health for
3 glut of non-essential aircraft. Bravo for these bills
4 standing against this. Regarding eVTOL, advanced air
5 mobility, I've been asking how much wildlife and bird
6 removal pulling will have to happen for them to
7 remain safe, and will this change trespassing laws? I
8 don't even receive acknowledgement of the questions.
9 Can the funds generated by helicopter violations move
10 from general fund into a fund designated specifically
11 for combating the aerial problem? Finally, I applaud
12 New York for writing these..

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time is expired. Thank
14 you.

15 DORINNE TYE: Oh, thank you for
16 acknowledging that the amount of people suffering
17 from sea to shining sea for helicopter and aviation
18 excesses, including helicopter tours, will no longer
19 be tolerated. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much.

21 I'd now like to call Arlene Lillian
22 Bronzaft.

23 I know we lost you when you were just
24 beginning.

25 ARLENE LILLIAN BRONZAFT: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: We can hear you, yes.

3 ARLENE LILLIAN BRONZAFT: Okay. Arlene

4 Bronzaft, Professor Emeritus of the City University

5 of New York and member of the board of GrowNYC. I am

6 a researcher writer on the effects of noise on

7 people's mental and physical health. My first two

8 studies, which are considered the landmark studies in

9 the field, were done to explore the impact of

10 elevated train noise on children's learning when

11 their school was adjacent to the train track and,

12 when I compared the reading scores of children

13 adjacent to the train track to the children on the

14 quiet side of the building, they were nearly a year

15 behind in reading, and that is by sixth grade. That

16 is considerable. Fortunately, the Transit Authority

17 chose the site of the school to test out a program on

18 abating noise on the tracks by installing rubber

19 resilient pads, and the Board of Ed put acoustical

20 ceilings in the classroom. I was then asked by a

21 public official to go back to the school and see if

22 this made a difference. Well, it certainly did. When

23 I compared the reading scores of children next to the

24 elevator train track, and it was now quieter, with

25 children on the quiet side of the building, they were

2 both reading at the same level. The FAA has used
3 these two studies plus studies confirming these
4 results that followed, and they have spent nearly 400
5 million to quiet schools adjacent to their aircraft.
6 I've also done two studies in New York City on the
7 effects of aircraft noise on people's health and
8 well-being and, should you be interested, I can give
9 you their citations. I heard that at the introduction
10 that you were interested in exploring the impact of
11 noise on people in parks because I also do write
12 about the importance of quiet in people's lives, and
13 I can assist you in that and presently I'm working..

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time is expired.

15 Thank you.

16 ARLENE LILLIAN BRONZAFT: I'm working at
17 Columbia on a noise study. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much for
19 testifying today, and I would love to read anything
20 you'd send over even though we (INAUDIBLE)

21 ARLENE LILLIAN BRONZAFT: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Right now and found
23 something.

24 ARLENE LILLIAN BRONZAFT: You like to
25 read? Okay. It's readable. It's readable.

2 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Great. I look forward
3 to it.

4 I'd now like to call on Mark Diller.

5 MARK DILLER: Good afternoon. Thank you
6 for hanging in so long. Quick shout out to Staff
7 Counsel as well as the Chair for hanging in with us.
8 Thank you. I'm a member of one community board and I
9 work at another one, I'm a member of the Civic
10 Engagement Commission, and I'm testifying on behalf
11 of none of those folks. This is just me. You've heard
12 so much about the details and the science and so
13 forth that I won't burden you with a repetition so
14 I'll just share one experience, which was Shakespeare
15 in the Park in Central Park last summer right as
16 Hamlet was giving his soliloquy, which we can all
17 quote, a really dramatic moment of theater surrounded
18 by all kinds of folks who were tourists themselves,
19 were interrupted by a helicopter literally hovering
20 overhead so that I assume one or a small handful of
21 tourists could take a photo. The unnecessary
22 helicopter traffic in effect pits some tourists
23 against others, and this is not the kind of tourism
24 welcome we want for all of our folks on the ground.
25 Someone once described parking as the fertility drug

2 for car ownership. Well, the use of our EDC heliports
3 is surely the fertility drug of having excess and
4 unnecessary helicopter traffic. I would encourage the
5 adoption of the bills that you have put forward and I
6 thank you for the foresight in drafting and bringing
7 them forward and for this hearing. Thanks so much.

8 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Thank you so much.

9 I'd now like to call on Michael McCready.

10 MICHAEL MCCREADY: Hello. Thank you. Thank
11 you for your patience this afternoon. I'm on a
12 business trip overseas, but I'm calling in because
13 this is such an important issue to us. We live on the
14 Upper West Side, having moved there from downtown,
15 thinking we were moving to a quieter neighborhood. It
16 feels like we live on a rumbling highway, helicopters
17 going by constantly, the windows rumble, the dog
18 hides under the table, she's on anti-anxiety
19 medication now. Someone said that they have to stop
20 business meetings sometimes because of the helicopter
21 noise. That is certainly our case. I'd just like
22 people to try to imagine if we allowed tourists to
23 rent an ambulance or a fire engine to tour
24 neighborhoods. That's kind what it's like with these
25 non-essential flights so I want to thank you for your

2 time and for listening to us and for your patience.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you for that.

5 Please don't give any other industries any other
6 ideas.

7 I'd now like to call in Sam Pesin.

8 SAM PESIN: (INAUDIBLE) Morris Pesin, the
9 father of Liberty State Park, and I'm the President
10 of the Friends of Liberty State Park. I express
11 strong support for the crucial helicopter resolutions
12 and bills. Liberty Park is 2,000 feet behind Lady
13 Liberty on the Jersey City waterfront. It's a
14 beautiful urban park where people engage in a
15 multitude of unstructured recreation, passive
16 recreation, and nature enjoyment activities. Liberty
17 Park is New Jersey's Central Park. It's visited by 5
18 million people each year. The park is an emotional
19 health and mental health public resource for people
20 seeking a peaceful experience in this urban green
21 area that is so densely populated. These public-be-
22 damned helicopter tour companies constantly are
23 violating the National Park Service voluntary
24 agreement, as limited in scope and unacceptable as
25 that 2023 agreement was, and they continually fly

2 around the Statue and into the so-called avoidance
3 zone. The only real solution is a ban of non-
4 essential helicopters. The Friends were in full
5 support of the powerful testimony of Stop the Chop
6 and all the other amazing speakers today that made
7 the no-brainer case for banning non-essential
8 helicopters so please stand up for people on both
9 sides of the Hudson River. If Lady Liberty was alive,
10 she would urge you to pass these resolutions and
11 bills. Lady Liberty would be covering her ears every
12 day and yelling at the public-be-damned non-essential
13 helicopters as millions of people do every day to
14 shut the hell up and not come back. The public good
15 is clearly more important than helicopter industry
16 profits so thank you for considering taking this
17 crucial action on behalf of urban residents in
18 neighborhoods on both sides of the Hudson and people
19 using Liberty State Park in New York City parks.
20 Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Thank you so much for
22 your testimony.

23 Seeing no one else signed up online
24 virtually or in-person, I would just like to say
25 thank you for everyone who joined us both at the

2 rally earlier today for folks from Stop the Chop New
3 York/New Jersey and for everyone that patiently
4 waited here in person and online to talk about this
5 super-important hearing topic, and we look forward to
6 the work ahead.

7 Thank you all so much, and this hearing
8 is now adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date May 13, 2024