Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0291-2022	**Version:**	*	**Name:**	United States Federal Aviation Administration to ban all non-essential helicopter travel, including tourist and chartered helicopter flights over NYC.
Type:	Resolution			**Status:**	Filed (End of Session)
				In control:	Committee on Economic Development
On agenda:	8/11/2022				
Enactment date:				**Enactment #:**	

Title: Resolution calling upon the United States Federal Aviation Administration to ban all non-essential helicopter travel, including tourist and chartered helicopter flights over New York City.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Attachments: 1. Res. No. 291, 2. August 11, 2022 - Stated Meeting Agenda, 3. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 8-11-22, 4. Minutes of the Stated Meeting - August 11, 2022

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
8/11/2022	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
8/11/2022	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2023	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 291

Resolution calling upon the United States Federal Aviation Administration to ban all non-essential helicopter travel, including tourist and chartered helicopter flights over New York City.

By Council Members Brewer, Restler, Hanif, Won, Nurse, Gutiérrez, Yeger and Joseph (by request of the Manhattan Borough President and the Brooklyn Borough President)

Whereas, There are thousands of commercial helicopter flights over the City of New York each month; and

Whereas, There have been several notable accidents over the City's airspace, raising congestion and safety issues; and

Whereas, In May of 2019, a charter helicopter crashed into the Hudson River while the pilot, who suffered a hand injury, was moving the aircraft from the fueling area to the customer section of the West 30th Street Heliport; and

Whereas, A month later in June of 2019, a helicopter crashed on the roof of a building in Manhattan,

powered by Legistar™

killing the pilot who was the sole person in the aircraft; and

Whereas, Before these incidents, there were several other notable accidents over the City's airspace; and

Whereas, In April of 1997, a corporate helicopter taking off from a heliport on East 60th Street, crashed into the East River, killing one passenger and injuring three others; and

Whereas, Later that same year, a helicopter was forced to make an emergency landing after clipping a Manhattan building, resulting in damage to the helicopter's rotor; and

Whereas, In 2007, a tour helicopter had to make an emergency landing in the Hudson River on its emergency pontoons; and

Whereas, On August 8, 2009, a helicopter operated by Liberty Helicopter Tours collided with a small private plane over the Hudson River resulting in the deaths of all nine individuals aboard both crafts making the incident one of the deadliest helicopter accidents in New York City history; and

Whereas, In October of 2011, a woman was killed and four others were injured when a tour helicopter crashed into the East River; and

Whereas, In June of 2013, a tour helicopter carrying a family of four and their pilot made an emergency landing in the Hudson River after the helicopter lost power; and

Whereas, In March of 2018, another helicopter operated by Liberty Helicopter Tours crashed in the East River resulting in the deaths of five passengers on board, however the pilot survived; and

Whereas, This accident was the third involving Liberty Helicopter since 2007 and since this incident, the United States Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") banned flights that use restraints in which passengers cannot easily free themselves ; and

Whereas, These accidents are reminders of the dangers associated with helicopters in an urban setting; and

Whereas, According to the Natural Resources Defense Council's 1999 study "Needless Noise: The Negative Impacts of Helicopter Traffic in New York City and the Tri-State Region," exposure to frequent

overhead flights are associated with a number of health effects in children, including high blood pressure, neuroendocrinological issues, impaired psychological and cognitive functions, learned helplessness, poorer long-term memory, and diminished reading comprehension; and

Whereas, Helicopters emit air pollutants such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, and formaldehyde, which are known to cause asthma, cancer and other illnesses; and

Whereas, The federal government regulates airspace and the FAA is the entity that is charged with developing airspace regulations; and

Whereas, In an attempt to make the airspace over New York City safer, on September 2, 2009, the FAA announced new recommendations that would include new training programs for pilots, air-traffic controllers, and tourist helicopter operators, set new mandatory speed limits for these vehicles and require all pilots to tune into the same radio channel; and

Whereas, Despite these proposed safety measures, some public officials felt the recommendations did not go far enough, because air traffic controllers would still not be required to monitor aircraft below 1,000 feet; and

Whereas, In April 2010, the New York City Economic Development Corporation ("EDC") released a Helicopter Sightseeing Plan (the Plan) to address the problems presented by tourist helicopter flights operating on city-owned property; and

Whereas, The Plan eliminated short tours, sightseeing tours over Central Park and the Empire State Building and sightseeing flights over Brooklyn; and

Whereas, The Plan also improved sightseeing tour routes and added an enhanced 3-1-1 protocol directing helicopter complaints to 3-1-1 representatives for input, improving EDC's ability to track complaints and allowing the agency to report data on noise complaints more effectively; and

Whereas, Helicopter-related noise complaints to New York City's 3-1-1 increased from 10,359 in 2020 to 25,821 in 2021 with a vast majority of the complaints coming from Manhattan; and

Whereas, During the past 5-years, 3-1-1 has experienced a 2,329% increase in noise complaints related to helicopters; and

Whereas, However, the airspace above New York City remains dangerous for these types of vehicles; and

Whereas, A great deal of public outcry for relief from harms caused by helicopter tours in New York City still exists, including from a wide range of public officials; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Federal Aviation Administration to ban all non-essential helicopter travel, including tourist and chartered helicopter flights over New York City.

WJH
LS 282
8/8/2022

PM
LS# 2684/1709/11571
Res. 1005-2019