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HAI-FAA Symposium Seeks to Address Citizen Concerns in NYC-NJ Region

Industry Leaders Urge Voluntary Action to Resolve Sound Complaints

Alexandria, Va. (June 22, 2023)– Operators, FAA, law enforcement, airport representatives, Helicopter Association International (HAI), and other stakeholders from the New York City–New Jersey region met last week at a joint FAA-HAI Helicopter Symposium to proactively address the concerns of residents with helicopter operations in their area.

Sound complaints were at the top of that list.

Jeff Smith, HAI’s current chair and the chief pilot with R.O.P. Aviation based in Teterboro, New Jersey, stresses the importance of helicopter operators, government officials, and the public collaborating to find workable solutions.

“Voluntarily taking action to bring stakeholders together to discuss options and implement solutions is the best way to ensure that the public’s concerns are addressed and that our aircraft keep flying,” he says.

Discussions at the symposium centered around several key themes: ensuring that citizens have their voices heard, finding solutions mutually agreeable to the public and industry, and enabling the public to access information that explains why those operators are flying.

A [2021 report from the Government Accountability Office](#) regarding rotorcraft operations in and around the Washington, D.C. region suggested that sharing information about the types of helicopter missions being conducted in the airspace, including military, air ambulance, and law enforcement flights, would address many of the public’s concerns.

“When residents learn that law enforcement or a critically injured person is flying over their home at 1:00 am enroute to an emergency room, they understand why these operations cannot simply be halted,” says Cade Clark, HAI VP of Government Affairs.

Clark and Smith agree that replicating in the NYC metro area the recent successful, collaborative Washington, D.C., efforts to mitigate sound from helicopter operations would demonstrate to the public that the industry is committed to addressing their concerns.

Several bills in the New York legislature and in Congress would, if passed into law, have adverse and unintended consequences such as expensive litigation, delayed relief for complainants, and conflicting state and federal regulations that would ultimately impede the safe and efficient operation of the region’s airspace, one of the busiest in the country.

“It’s imperative for operators in the NYC region—even those who are not HAI members—to work collaboratively with government leaders, regulatory bodies, and the public to identify and implement solutions that address the public’s concerns while ensuring the highest levels of safety,” says Smith.

Operators, other industry stakeholders, HAI representatives, and government officials will reconvene this fall to continue to discuss solutions for implementation.

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HAI is the professional trade association for the global helicopter industry and represents more than 1,100 companies and over 16,000 industry professionals in more than 65 countries. Each year, HAI members safely operate more than 3,700 helicopters and remotely piloted aircraft approximately 2.9 million hours. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective business tool that provides unique advantages to society and to the advancement of the international vertical aviation community.