

*Dedicated to the Advancement of the International Helicopter Community*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 7, 2023

Contact: Dan Sweet

Phone: 703-302-8466

Email: dan.sweet@rotor.org

## **HAI Issues Call to Action on Proposed Air Tour Management Plans**

### ***Helicopter Tours of National Parks Are Threatened with Elimination***

*Alexandria, Va. (June 7, 2023)* – In response to the US National Park Service’s (NPS) severe curtailment of air tours over national park lands, Helicopter Association International (HAI) is calling on its members and allies to show their support for America’s air tour industry.

Both the NPS and the FAA are seeking public feedback on draft Air Tour Management Plans (ATMPs) and associated environmental assessments (EAs) proposed for four parks in two states: Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park and Haleakalā National Park in Hawaii, and Badlands National Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota. The current draft ATMPs for the two South Dakota locations eliminate ALL air tours; those proposed for the Hawaii sites cut air tours by 50% or more.

Besides closing off opportunities for thousands of visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of the parks, the NPS aims to cut back air-tour flights to such a degree that some tour operations will close.

HAI is requesting that its members and others in the industry comment on these draft ATMPs by Jun. 20, 2023, to demonstrate their support for keeping America’s national parks open to all.

Supporters can quickly and easily add comments to each proposal’s official register before the Jun. 20 deadline by clicking on the links below. Because the government counts form letters as a single comment, HAI asks that respondents take a moment to personalize their response and share their reasons why the flights should continue:

- [Badlands National Park ATMP](#) completely eliminates air tours
- [Haleakalā National Park ATMP](#) cuts air tours by 50%
- [Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park ATMP](#) cuts air tours by 86%
- [Mount Rushmore National Memorial ATMP](#) completely eliminates air tours.

“It is time to use our collective voice, even if you do not think you are affected by these proposals,” says James Viola, HAI president and CEO. “The Park Service will continue to produce these ATMPs for other lands administered by them, so it is important that our industry speaks up now. I suggest that you also forward this message to your friends and colleagues so that the Park Service hears us loud and clear.”

Flying tours is an important workforce development pipeline for the vertical aviation industry. Reducing or eliminating these flights will create significant complications for an industry that is already facing a shortage of skilled personnel. Moreover, tourism is a major economic driver in both Hawaii and South Dakota.

“The helicopter tour businesses buy fuel and supplies from other local businesses. Their employees have mortgages, buy groceries, and pay taxes. While some localities might be able to absorb the loss of an entire tourism sector, these ATMPs will probably have a significant economic impact on smaller communities that are dependent on tourism,” says Viola.

#####

*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.*