



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Brooklyn, Manhattan Electeds and Residents Rally to “Stop the Chop”

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*Officials Call to End All Tourist Helicopter Flights from
Downtown Manhattan Heliport*

Electeds: Enough is Enough Over Brooklyn, Manhattan Neighborhoods

BROOKLYN – Today, State Senator Daniel Squadron, Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Assemblywoman Joan Millman, Councilmember Stephen Levin, Councilmember Brad Lander, Councilwoman Sara M. González, Councilmember Gale A. Brewer, and Brooklyn and Manhattan community leaders and residents will rally to end all tourist helicopter flights from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport (DMH).

The call for a complete ban on tourist helicopter flights from DMH follows a year in which local elected officials, with the cooperation of the New York City Economic Development Corporation and the industry, successfully called for increased regulations. Unfortunately, these regulations have not yielded sufficient improvement to residents' quality of life.

Beginning in 2010, tourist flights were banned from the West 30th Street Heliport, forcing them to use DMH – and causing a big uptick in chopper noise and traffic in the already-crowded skies over New York Harbor and the surrounding neighborhoods.

State Senator Daniel Squadron said, "It's time to stop the never-ending parade of tourist flights from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport. Chopper tours can't come at the expense of our neighborhoods' quality of life. I appreciate that for a year EDC and the helicopter industry have worked cooperatively to create regulations, but at this point the surest way to offer the community relief is to end the tourist flights from DMH."

"I have long been outraged by the wild west nature of New York's local airspace," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler. "It was only two years ago, following the tragic air crash over the Hudson River, that we finally secured some minor improvements to our helicopter regulations. But it is clear today that the industry's voluntary routes and self-oversight are not working, and much more needs to be done from both a safety and quality of life perspective. We are calling for a complete ban on all tourist helicopters from the Downtown Heliport."

"Addressing helicopter traffic is not only a quality of life issue for Brooklyn residents, it is a public safety matter for those in the sky and on the ground," said Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez.

"My constituents in Red Hook and every other resident of Brooklyn should not have to suffer the noise of tourist helicopters!" said State Senator Velmanette Montgomery. "While I recognize the importance of tourism to the NYC economy, these New Jersey based tour flights contribute nothing substantial and undermine the property values and quality of life for thousands of tax paying New York City households and businesses. Compromises have been tried but these flight operators continue to abuse our people. So now it is time to stop them completely. I stand squarely beside my colleagues and my constituents in calling for a halt to all tourist flights over Brooklyn from lower Manhattan. Enough is enough!"

"Issues of helicopter noise have been a major concern for over a decade," said Assemblywoman Joan L. Millman. "Living in Downtown Brooklyn we are subject to the constant helicopter noise as they circle and hover over our neighborhoods. It affects our quality of life. Last May, EDC issued a report and stated that because of the increase of helicopter noise from sightseeing tours' flights over Brooklyn, all flights will be eliminated. However, these tourist helicopters' flight pattern includes using Buttermilk Channel in order to fly up the Hudson River. This is causing unnecessary helicopter noise over residential communities in Brooklyn. Today's rally is to demand that EDC end the flights – NOW."

“I am deeply disappointed that, despite last year’s agreement to reduce helicopter traffic, residents of Brooklyn Heights and other waterfront neighborhoods are still being bombarded by helicopter noise. Since helicopter operators have been unwilling to comply with the basic restrictions imposed in last year’s agreement, the EDC must institute a full ban of helicopter tours over Brooklyn,” said Councilmember Stephen Levin.

“Residents of the Columbia Waterfront, Red Hook, and Brooklyn Heights should be allowed to get back the quiet they’d previously enjoyed,” said Councilmember Brad Lander. “For years, they’ve had to deal with obtrusive noise from tourist helicopters every few minutes all day Saturday and Sunday. We need to take action to stop obtrusive tourist helicopter noise permanently.”

“My office has been inundated with calls about the huge disturbance this is causing in the everyday lives of many of my constituents,” said Councilwoman Sara M. González. “I have been speaking with top officials at EDC and Red Hook leaders about alleviating this problem as quickly as possible. I am proud to stand with my colleagues and residents of Red Hook and surrounding neighborhoods to demand that the rules are followed and unnecessary helicopter noise is eliminated from our communities.”

"I commend the Economic Development Cooperation for their continued efforts to reduce the number of low-flying rogue tour helicopters. And while some of these tour companies have adhered to the new rules, it has become clear that this problem will not be resolved until tour helicopters are completely restricted," said Councilmember Gale A. Brewer.

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