



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

P.O. Box 2622, New York, NY 10108
www.mcb4.nyc

LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

November 16, 2020

Hon. Jerrold Nadler
U.S. Congressman
10th District of New York
201 Varick Street, Suite 669
New York, NY 10014

Hon. Phil Murphy
Governor, New Jersey
Office of Governor, P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor, New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: H.R. 4880 – The Improving Helicopter Safety Act of 2019

Dear Congressman Nadler, Governor Murphy, and Governor Cuomo,

We are writing to Congressman Nadler to indicate our support for the bill you are co-sponsoring, [H.R.4880](#) – The Improving Helicopter Safety Act of 2019, and to Governors Cuomo and Murphy to enlist their help in addressing this ongoing threat to the safety, environment, and peaceful enjoyment of our residents.

Manhattan Community Board Four (MCB4) residents in the neighborhood of Chelsea have brought to the Board's attention the incessant noise from helicopter sightseeing tours currently using multiple flight paths directly over Manhattan airspace, despite a standing agreement intending to limit such tours.

The company, New York On Air (FlyNYON), currently operates out of Kearny, New Jersey, in order to circumvent a 2016 agreement reached between the City and helicopter companies based

at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport on the East River Piers. You may recall that this operator was responsible for the death of five passengers in 2018, who drowned in the Hudson River following a crash. The agreement stipulates that sightseeing operators would:

- Avoid flying over land
- Reduce the overall number of flights
- Not fly on Sunday
- No flights over Governors Island
- Turn around before the George Washington Bridge when flying up the Hudson River¹

By operating out of Kearny, stepping up their schedule when New York-based operators were constrained by COVID restrictions, and by routinely masquerading sightseeing tours as “Doors-off photographic flights,” FlyNYON has succeeded in over-saturating our airspace with non-essential helicopter traffic. Their web site lists at least 20 flights a day directly over Manhattan’s airspace, seven days a week. Some of their scheduled flights take place after dark, so the operators turn on powerful searchlights, which further disturbs city residents. The operators have also been known to hover at low altitudes in order for their paying passengers to get a shot. All of these practices are unsafe, disturbing, and inappropriate.

New Yorkers, like many Americans, are under a great deal of duress during the pandemic and its resultant economic impacts. This operator is demonstrably exploiting the pandemic and operating in bad faith. At its November 4th Full Board meeting by a vote of 43 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, MCB4 fully supports the legislation Rep. Nadler has introduced.

Governor Murphy, while we acknowledge this operator’s right to commerce, it’s past time to rein in their excessive practices. Please help us.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-chair
Transportation Planning Committee

¹ <https://edc.nyc.gov/press-release/nycedc-and-helicopter-tourism-jobs-council-announce-new-measures-reduce-helicopter>

cc: Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senator
Hon. Bill de Blasio, NYC Mayor
Hon. Corey Johnson, NYC Council Speaker