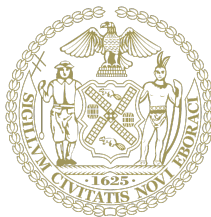


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## **Majority Leader Amanda Farias Hosts Press Conference Ahead of her Hearing on Helicopter Noise and Safety**

*Watch the committee hearing [live here](#)*

**New York, NY**— Majority Leader Amanda Farias held a press conference ahead of the New York City Council’s Committee on Economic Development hearing on the topic of helicopter noise and safety alongside Council Member Lincoln Restler, Council Member Christopher Marte, advocates from Stop the Chop NY/NJ, and more.

At today’s hearing Farias heard Introductions [0026](#), [0027](#), [0070](#) and Resolutions [085](#), [0226](#), [0233](#). Introductions 26 and 27, which Farias is the prime sponsor of, focuses on future-forward solutions to reform the helicopter industry to meet the needs of the 21st century and the future of New York City. Introduction 26 focuses on the incorporation of electric helicopters into the industry, see a [demonstration of an electric helicopter with Mayor Eric Adams and NYCEDC earlier this year here](#).

The resolutions heard today, sponsored by Council Members Brewer and Gennaro, call on New York State and the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to step in and help the City implement the reforms New Yorkers and the City Council are calling for. This includes calling upon the FAA to ban all non-essential helicopter travel, including tourist and chartered helicopter flights over New York City, as well as for the New York State Legislature to amend the Hudson River Park Trust Act by banning non-essential use of its heliport and establish a noise tax on non-essential helicopter and seaplane flights in cities with a population of one million or more.

In 2016 the New York City Council took a bold step with cutting the number of sightseeing flights leaving from the Wall Street heliport in half, resulting in about 30,000 fewer flights per year. Evenstill, [over the past five years 311 has seen a staggering 2,329% increase in helicopter noise complaints with over 59,000 complaints filed with 311 in 2023 alone](#).

In November 2022, the Majority Leader's held an initial hearing on the subject, at which the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) stated that the industry [generates less than \\$2 million in revenue for the city annually](#). At the time of the hearing she questioned, "does that feel worth it in terms of all the complaints that we have?" That question stands today as she enters the New York City Council hearing room to chair her second hearing on the subject of the helicopter industry.

"Right now New York City's helicopter industry is bringing minimum benefit, and maximum harm from both noise and carbon pollution," said **Majority Leader Amanda Farías**. "New York City needs to be at the forefront of the electrification movement for the sake of our neighbors, our planet, and to remain an industry leader in climate action. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the helicopter industry need to expedite their policies in this direction as well. That is why I have introduced and continue to advocate for the passage of both Introductions 26 and 27 to ensure we are regulating the noise levels and thinking forwardly about innovative ways to meet our climate goals."

"Helicopters disrupt our communities and needlessly pollute our skies," said **Council Member Lincoln Restler**. "New Yorkers should not be forced to suffer from noise and environmental pollution so a few people can get to the Hamptons or JFK as quickly as possible. I'm grateful that Majority Leader Farías is holding a hearing on our bill Intro 70 to end nonessential helicopter travel and related legislation."

"Many of my Brooklyn and Queens neighbors suffer from consistent noise pollution due to non-essential helicopter flights," said **Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez**. "The noise from these flights lowers the quality of life of residents across the city, while the fossil-fuel-based flights also contribute to environmental degradation. The helicopters also crowd the skies to a dangerous level that we've seen result in multiple tragic accidents over the years. I'm proud to support this bill before the City Council to halt non-essential helicopter flights at the two city-owned heliports and eliminate tens of thousands of unnecessary flights every year."

"The constant whirring and carbon spewing from business, leisure, and tourist helicopter trips coming and going from the Downtown Manhattan and [East 34<sup>th</sup> Street](#) heliports make thousands of residents of Manhattan and Brooklyn miserable," said **Comptroller Brad Lander**. "Residential noise complaints have doubled from private helicopter trips, and a one-hour trip in a private helicopter emits forty times as much carbon than a one-hour car trip-- all that for a select few who can afford the luxury of a helicopter ride. Banning nonessential, fossil fuel helicopters and transitioning to electric flights would swiftly save the city from unnecessary noise and fuel pollution."

“Helicopters are more than just a nuisance. They’re a serious public health issue, from noise pollution, to carbon emissions, to detrimental mental health effects,” **said Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “It’s time to ban non-essential, loud and carbon emitting helicopters from City-owned heliports.”

“Non-essential helicopters must be restricted from airspace over Manhattan, where they cause a range of problems for residents on the West Side, including disruption to life and work, noise pollution and carbon emissions - in addition to occupying valuable open space in the Hudson River Park. I’ve passed legislation in Albany to crack down on this nuisance which was unfortunately vetoed. That said, we’re not giving up. I strongly support the City Council in their efforts and look forward to continuing our partnership with advocates and federal, state and city colleagues to once and for all, stop the chop,” **said State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal**.

“When I took office, this was one of the first pieces of legislation I introduced because constituents in our tri-borough waterfront district understand firsthand the impact of incessant noise generated by tourist charters and wealthy air commuters. These non-essential flights contribute to our city’s noise and air pollution, emitting high decibel levels and sometimes releasing 40 times more carbon dioxide than the average car. I take great pride in the City Council’s resolution supporting my legislation, ensuring that those disrupting New Yorkers’ lives pay their fair share,” **said State Senator Kristen Gonzalez**.

“Creating a greener, more sustainable city begins with cracking down on non-stop noise and pollution generated by incessant helicopter traffic,” said Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF-Manhattan), Chair of the Assembly Committee on Housing. “Helicopters not only spew toxins over our communities and river ways, but, with every tourist flight, they also emit hundreds of pounds of carbon dioxide emissions on an hourly basis around New York City. As we ring in Earth Day, we must stand firm against companies that pad their bottom line while adversely impacting the health of everyday New Yorkers and cause the overall decline of our environment. A combination of efforts at the city and state level will go a long way in holding these actors accountable, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to make these bills a reality for all,” said **State Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal**.

“The proliferation of helicopter flights over the City harms both our environment and our health. I believe these nuisance flights should be banned altogether and applaud the Council’s efforts in this regard. At minimum, these flights should be heavily taxed to account for negative externalities, and I very much appreciate the Council resolution in support of my legislation to do just that,” **said State Assemblymember Robert Carroll**.

“Stop the Chop NY/NJ (STCNYNJ), a grassroots, non-profit environmental organization that educates the public on the harms caused by nonessential helicopter flights over the New York metropolitan area, applauds NYC Council Majority Leader Amanda Farias and her colleagues for the introduction of these six strong helicopter-issue bills and resolutions. We support their

passage. This plethora of helicopter-related legislation being heard at today's Council Hearing demonstrates a huge groundswell of support for all those suffering from the negative impacts of the seemingly endless air parade of tourist and commuter helicopters loudly buzzing over NYC. Tourist and commuter helicopter companies have for too long been allowed to unfairly externalize their environmental, health, and quality of life impacts to the rest of society. Many, if not most, of our parks and waterways have become hellish helicopter highways; -- instead of providing a peaceful respite from the busy city streets, they are now marred by this helicopter plague. 311 complaints have skyrocketed as we no longer can enjoy a peaceful day in our parks, along our waterfronts, or in our homes without the all too frequent roar and vibrations of low-flying helicopters. This unnecessary mode of transportation is wreaking havoc with New Yorkers' lives. It is time to 'stop the chop' and ban these needless and harmful nonessential helicopter flights now," **said Melissa Elstein, Board Chair, Stop the Chop NY/NJ.**

"New York City residents have been plagued for years by these noisy and completely unnecessary intrusions into our parks, playgrounds, and public spaces, not to mention our homes and peace of mind. By prioritizing a few minutes of fun for tourists and the convenience of those few with corporate expense accounts rushing to the airport or the Hamptons, the city is essentially telling millions of New Yorkers that our climate, safety, and public health simply don't matter. We commend Majority Leader Farias and all our elected officials for their sustained commitment to ending non-essential helicopter traffic in New York City. The time has come to end this unsustainable assault on New Yorkers," **said Lara Birnback, Executive Director, Brooklyn Heights Association.**

"There is no other example in New York City where so few people impact the lives of so many. The noise and pollution generated by nonessential helicopter traffic is a constant reminder of how we often put the wants of the few ahead of the needs of the many. A few people flying overhead creates a deafening roar that disturbs the peace, interrupts conversation and quiet reflection and in many places throughout the city prohibits the use of outdoor space for teaching learning. This is true on Governors Island where I have spent the last 15 years teaching, learning and working," **said Pete Malinowski, Executive Director, Billion Oyster Project.**

"NYC has invested more than \$9 Billion over the last 20 years in building, expanding, and restoring parks across the city, to make a more livable, attractive, and environmentally sustainable city while improving public and environmental health," **said Adrian Benepe, President and CEO of Brooklyn Botanic Garden.** "The City must not allow the degradation of that massive investment by permitting nonessential, luxury tourist and commuter helicopter flights to destroy the sense of a public oasis in scores of parks, bombarding them with 60,000 flights a year originating in publicly owned Manhattan heliports, dumping nonstop noise and air pollution on millions of New Yorkers. As former NYC Parks Commissioner (who oversaw much of that park creation and expansion), as a 65-year resident of the Upper West Side, and as President of Brooklyn Botanic Garden, I join many other political, civic, and environmental

leaders and tens of thousands of New Yorkers in calling on the City to end the hugely damaging use of City heliports by this tiny, toxic, private industry,” **said Adrian Benepe, President & CEO, Brooklyn Botanic Garden.**

“The Battery, the park closest to Downtown Manhattan Heliport, implores the NYC Council to stop chopper deafening noise and sickening fumes! We value the buzz of our dragonflies and pollinator bees, but helicopters NO. THEY pollute, heat the air, harm lungs, ears, and exacerbate climate change. The Battery says YES to bill Int. 26- 2024 to ban nonessential fuel-based helicopters and keep the skies clean and park life serene,” **said Warrie Price, Chair & Founder, The Battery Conservancy.**

"Every rotor's rotation is a disruption to the peace of millions. In precious green spaces like Riverside Park, West Harlem Piers Park, and Fort Washington Park, the incessant whirring of tourist helicopters invades the air over 100 times a day, drowning out the sounds of nature and eroding the quality of life for local communities. It's time for the City to prioritize the health and well-being of New Yorkers over a tiny special interest in the sky,” **said Merritt Birnbaum, President & CEO, Riverside Park Conservancy.**

“Central Park is a sanctuary from the pace and pressures of city life, thoughtfully designed and managed for millions of people to find respite. However, hovering, loud non-essential helicopter traffic is unnerving and a real impediment for New Yorkers seeking calm and escape in Central Park. The Conservancy supports these bills and urges the City Council to take action,” **said David Saltonstall, Vice President for Government Relations, Policy & Community Affairs, Central Park Conservancy.**

“Prospect Park is Brooklyn's Backyard—it is where community members come to decompress, recharge and connect with friends and loved ones," **said Prospect Park Alliance President, Morgan Monaco.** "The serenity and community connections offered by our 585 acres are impeded by helicopter traffic overhead and the air and noise pollution caused by these helicopters. The environmental effects of helicopter traffic are detrimental to the quality of life of Brooklyn residents and park goes on a daily basis and Prospect Park Alliance urges the NYC Council to limit these impacts by banning nonessential helicopter traffic.”

"We fully support the efforts of the members of the Stop the Chop initiative and the City Council legislation that will create a quieter learning environment for the students of the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School located on Governors Island. Since a good portion of our curriculum and teaching is reliant on using our outdoor space learning environment, the noise from neighboring heliports creates a difficult atmosphere toward meeting our mission of providing opportunities to NYC students to find entry into the Maritime workforce,” **said Aneal Helms, Interim Acting Principal, New York Harbor School.**

“Our waterfront restaurants employ over 300 New Yorkers and serve hundreds of thousands more. The loud, incessant roar of helicopters overhead does economic harm to us and routinely violates the peace of the last quiet refuge of our city, its parks and waterways. Helicopters are bad for business and bad for New York,” **said Alex Pincus, CEO Crew New York.**

“Free Shakespeare in the Park is one of the most beautiful expressions of democratic culture in the world. It is truly art for the people. To allow a few commercial helicopters to disrupt the lives of many New Yorkers and the joy of two thousand audience members a night is a gross civic indecency and one that can be easily rectified. I want to thank our elected officials for their work on this issue and their efforts to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers,” **said Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director of the Public Theater.**

“As the son of the ‘father/ founder’ of Liberty State Park (LSP) and its current President, I am expressing my strong support for the crucial helicopter legislation being heard today by the NYC Council. LSP is an urban waterfront park (New Jersey's Central Park behind Lady Liberty) that is visited by 5 million people each year. Unfortunately, park goers seeking a peaceful experience in this invaluable urban green oasis are continuously barraged by the extremely loud noise from nonessential helicopters. These public-be-damned helicopter tour companies constantly violate the National Park Service/ FAA voluntary agreement - as limited in scope as that 2023 agreement was - as they continually fly into the ‘Avoidance Zone’. The NY-NJ Harbor often sounds like it is under assault from the endless helicopter tours. The only solution is a ban of the nonessential helicopter traffic in order to protect Liberty State Park as an urban public health resource and improve the quality of life for Jersey City’s residents and visitors,” **said Sam Pesin, President, Friends of Liberty State Park.**

"We fully support the efforts of the members of the Stop the Chop initiative and the City Council legislation that will create a quieter learning environment for the students of the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School located on Governors Island. Since a good portion of our curriculum and teaching is reliant on using our outdoor space learning environment, the noise from neighboring heliports creates a difficult atmosphere toward meeting our mission of providing opportunities to NYC students to find entry into the Maritime workforce,” **said Aneal Helms, Interim Acting Principal, New York Harbor School.**

“Governors Island, the city's unique public space in the middle of NY harbor, is seriously impacted by sightseeing helicopter noise on a daily basis. The constant aerial assault on the island's historic district, National Monument, high school, parklands, arts and environmental projects, and wildlife has been described as ‘soul crushing.’ At times as many as 18 helicopters have been counted within a 15-minute period. A majority of these originate from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport (the source of 30,000 flights per year). A City Council ban on NYC based unessential helicopters is badly needed. And, as many of the flights over the island come from

New Jersey, the proposed federal ban of nonessential helicopter traffic over NYC is essential,” **said Roger Manning, Co-founder, Metro Area Governors Island Coalition (M.A.G.I.C.)**

“Nonessential helicopter traffic is a scourge for Battery Park City and many other impacted areas. It pollutes our communities with noise and fumes, while worsening climate change through excessive carbon emissions. The Battery Alliance, composed of thousands of local homeowners, wishes to thank the City Council for tackling this issue and standing up for the environment,” **said John Dellaportas, Vice President, The Battery Alliance.**

“We New Yorkers endure a lot of “necessary evil” noise and air pollution—transit, emergency vehicles, construction,” **said Actor Amy Schumer.** “But the unnecessary noise and air pollution from tourist and commuter helicopters adds painful insult to injury. Our homes, neighborhoods, and parks are bombarded with the deafening and alarming noise of these choppers 12 hours a day most days. I urge our elected leaders to end the flights of nonessential helicopters over New York City and its nearly 9 million residents.”

“Helicopter noise is not simply an ‘annoyance’ — it is a health hazard! The research that aviation noise adversely affects the health of the residents exposed to such noise is strong and must lead to ways that reduce the impacts to so many people who are exposed to such noise. We should also remember that medical costs in this country are borne by all its citizens, not just those who require medical treatment. By voting to prohibit non-essential helicopter operations, City Council members will be promoting essential mental and physical health,” **said Arline L. Bronzaft, Ph.D Professor Emerita, City University of New York.**

“Helicopter noise isn't just background chatter: it disrupts the symphony of New York City's wild birds, altering their songs and threatening their habitats,” **said Jessica Wilson, executive director of NYC Audubon.** “Since birds are a critical part of a healthy ecosystem, prohibiting helicopters is good for birds — and for people,” **said Jessica Wilson, Executive Director, NYC Audubon.**

“Nonessential helicopter flights are a disruptive acoustic intrusion in too many New York neighborhoods. Tourist helicopters may allow sightseers to survey many of the city’s spectacular sights quickly and from an aerial perspective, the Statue of Liberty, Central Park, and the Empire State Building among them, but at the cost of unnecessarily disturbing the peace and quiet of those living under their flight paths. Commuter helicopters allow the uber-wealthy to travel quickly from downtown Manhattan to JFK, or to their weekend homes, avoiding the crawling traffic or public transit most rely on. At least these flights have a practical reason, but they also contribute to deadly noise pollution, climate change, and air pollution. All nonessential helicopter flights are by definition unneeded. Taxing them heavily to pay for whatever mitigation measures are possible, or better yet banning them entirely, will both clean and quiet the air. The federal government has established no-fly zones in Grand Canyon National Park to protect animals and people in those zones. New York City and State should do the same for the five

boroughs. A quieter city with cleaner air will be a better and healthier city for all,” **said Daniel Fink MD, Program Chair, The Quiet Coalition - Quiet Communities, Inc.**

“Our waterfront restaurants employ over 300 New Yorkers and serve hundreds of thousands more. The loud, incessant roar of helicopters overhead does economic harm to us and routinely violates the peace of the last quiet refuge of our city - its parks and waterways. Helicopters are bad for business and bad for New York,” **said Alex Pincus, CEO Crew New York.**

“Hudson River Community Sailing exists because of the vision of the Hudson River Park Trust, and all of those people who for decades advocated the need and benefits for park land and access to the amazing natural water resources around NYC. Now HRCS serves over 3000 people annually with recreational sailing and maritime education. That number includes 250 students from 14 public schools who attend our programs at the boathouse year-round. It includes people with disabilities and injured veterans, and thousands of members of the general public who seek the excitement, relaxation, and camaraderie of sailing on small boats. We have members who sail 100+ times per year! We think it is an important service that is significantly marred by a busy heliport that serves the desires of the relatively few privileged New Yorkers. It is marred by constant noise pollution that is so loud we have to stop classes to pause until the helicopters land. It is marred by the intense odor of the jet fuel from idling helicopters when the wind is from the north. We have had to send staff home on occasion for this reason. We watched in horror at the helicopter that landed in the river a few years back, and we were sure at that time that action would be taken to review the significant risks this site poses. With the busiest bike path in the country a few yards from the rotor blades of this heliport, we fear it is a matter of time before there is a serious accident. We request that the City Council and NY State truly review the use of these heliports for non-necessary flights, which provide services for a privileged few while impacting the health and well-being of so many,” **said Executive Director Robert Burke, Hudson River Community Sailing.**

"350Brooklyn supports Intro 26, and the other helicopter issue related bills and resolutions. Allowing commuter and tourist helicopter travel from public airports/ heliports is a shameful economic and environmental injustice, generating air and noise pollution and health hazards in many parts of Brooklyn. This bill is an important first step in stemming the increase of unnecessary and unjust air transportation,” **said Sarah Reed, Volunteer, 350Brooklyn.**

“IPA residents are attracted to our one-of-a-kind overnight research program on Governors Island for its unique and secluded location—a green urban oasis that serves as a respite from the bustle of the city. Unfortunately, helicopter noise has been detrimental to the quality of life of our residents, disturbing their sleep, work and enjoyment of this urban park,” **said Alec Rovensky, Residency Director Institute for Public Architecture.**



“Helicopter noise isn't just background chatter: it disrupts the symphony of New York City's wild birds, altering their songs and threatening their habitats,” **said Jessica Wilson, executive director of NYC Audubon.** “Since birds are a critical part of a healthy ecosystem, prohibiting helicopters is good for birds — and for people.”

"Hudson Classical Theater Company is a nonprofit theater company that has produced plays in Riverside Park for 20 years. Roughly 3,000 audience members attend our shows and we work with more than 100 actors, artists & production staff every summer. The non-stop disturbance of the overhead helicopters have made enjoying and producing outdoor theater extremely difficult. Dozens of helicopters disrupt a single show and the deafening noise has discouraged audiences and our actors. It is such a terrible disservice to the thousands of audience members who come to our shows every summer. They come from all five boroughs, the tri-state area, and we often get national and international tourists, all excited to see an outdoor summer show, only to have the experience marred by the non-stop disturbance of the helicopters. We sincerely hope something can be done before we begin our 21<sup>st</sup> season of producing classical theater in Riverside Park this summer,” **said Susane Lee, Executive Artistic Director, Hudson Classical Theater Company.**

New Yorkers deserve to have parks and public spaces that are free from intrusive, and potentially harmful, noise and air pollution. We call on our city leaders to end the luxury helicopter rides that destroy the restorative calm of our parks,” **said Elizabeth Goldstein, President of the Municipal Art Society of New York.**

“The New York City Economic Development Corporation’s Request for Proposals for operation of the Downtown Manhattan Heliport for up to the next 20 years marks a critical opportunity to transform Pier 6, a coveted piece of City-owned waterfront real estate, from a heliport into a hub for low-carbon maritime freight,” said “This is another good reason for passage of the proposed Council bill banning fossil fueled helicopters from Pier 6. Rather than perpetuating 20 more years of petro-tourism, polluting New York’s skies and the unfortunate communities which live below, the city ought to use this RFP to upgrade its supply chain capabilities through the establishment of a ‘green freight’ terminal in Lower Manhattan. To choose instead to lock in another 20 years of nonessential helicopters that only benefit the wealthy would be backward – a major step backward,” **said Alex Matthiessen, Director of the Move NY Campaign.**

"NYC's 20,000 acres of forests and wetlands support critical wildlife and are places of respite for millions of New Yorkers. The sound pollution of helicopters is disruptive to the birds and other animals that call our natural areas home and interfere with the tranquility of the people who count on these places to escape from the stress of daily life,” **said Sarah Charlop-Powers, Executive Director, Natural Areas Conservancy.**

“Incessant helicopter noise from nonessential flights is an overlooked source of climate-destroying air pollution, a well-recognized public health stressor and a daily irritant to tens of thousands of New Yorkers. Bravo to Majority Leader Amanda Farias and Councilmember Lincoln Restler for advancing these sensible bills that would finally curtail nonessential helicopter travel in the nation’s most densely populated city and bring a measure of peace and safety to neighborhoods in all five boroughs,” **said Eric A. Goldstein, New York City Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.**