



421 Aviation Way  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

T. 301-695-2000  
F. 301-695-2375

[www.aopa.org](http://www.aopa.org)

June 22, 2010

Ms. Ellen Crum  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Airspace and Rules Group  
800 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20591

Re: The New York North Shore Helicopter Route Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Docket No. FAA-2010-0302, Notice No. 10-08

Dear Ms. Crum:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) representing more than 415,000 general aviation members and two-thirds of the nations pilots, has serious concerns with the lack of justification provided and the potential for safety implications associated with the Federal Aviation Administrations' (FAA) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), The New York North Shore Helicopter Route; Docket Number FAA-2010-0302. In addition, AOPA believes the lack of environmental analysis sets a precedent for the implementation of additional low-altitude routes and restrictions nationwide and ignores the requirements set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the regulatory process.

### **Justification Needed for Routing Modifications:**

While recognizing the FAA's authority to regulate the operation of aircraft and the use of navigable airspace, the NPRM does not provide any quantifiable justification or data to indicate there is indeed a need to mandate that all helicopters transiting Long Island fly offshore. Instead, the NPRM appears to be driven by noise concerns shared at the local level.

AOPA constantly reminds members that it is in the best interests of all airspace users flying under visual flight rules to ensure they fly neighborly and work to mitigate noise concerns of the non-flying public. However, to mandate VFR routes without quantifying the operational or environment impacts or providing any evidence that the routing will result in effective change flies in the face of good public policy and in fact, does not follow proper regulatory process or environmental policy.

To our knowledge, the FAA has never issued a rule predicated on noise reduction that did not include some type of environmental and operational analysis. As we have already seen through evidence of neighboring communities calling for restrictions of flight routes, every local community and municipality will likely fall in line to have rulemaking mandate VFR routes away from their neighborhoods. If the agency continues to issue routing modifications without data and evidence to support routing changes, we will soon be restricted from operating over all land masses and any populated areas.

The FAA has a responsibility as the agency that manages the national airspace system to ensure that procedural and routing changes are in fact justifiable and do not present safety or operational burdens at the expense of the airspace users. We strongly urge the agency to provide the necessary environmental and operational analysis needed to ensure the North Shore Route will produce effective noise mitigation while ensuring safety of the national airspace and reducing the risk of a mid-air collision over Long Island

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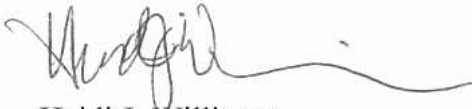
Page 2

**Safety Concerns:**

Based on the NPRM and the current charted North Shore Route, there is no altitude discrimination made between opposite direction helicopter traffic transiting the route. Further, the NPRM does not provide any guidance on the altitudes that should be flown when operating on the route. At a minimum, additional guidance is needed on altitude assignments for opposite direction traffic in order to decrease the risk of a mid-air accident over Long Island.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide comments and would remind the FAA that allowing for a reasonable comment period would have allowed the public a greater opportunity to provide meaningful and substantive comments. Based on the limited amount of time to comment and the arguments provided, we strongly recommend that the FAA abandon this rulemaking in lieu of a more refined and thought out approach to mitigating local noise concerns. Allowing a series of public meetings and a process to establish routes that will indeed produce effective noise mitigation as well as provide for safety and operational enhancements is much preferred to a strong-armed arbitrary rulemaking initiative that sets a dangerous precedent for establishing modified routes nationwide absent any data or environmental review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi J. Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Heidi J. Williams  
Senior Director  
Airspace and Modernization