

# **Planning and Policy Committee and Tourism Advisory Committee**

## **Public Forum**

### **Flightseeing Voluntary Compliance Measures and Short-term to Mid-term Flightseeing Mitigation Actions**

**February 28, 2000  
7:00 p.m. – 10:45 p.m.  
Centennial Hall**

## **SUMMARY**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **Planning and Policy Committee Members Present**

Tom Garrett, Chair, Frankie Pillifant, Vice Chair, Jim Powell, Kathleen Morse

#### **Tourism Advisory Committee Members Present**

Kim Metcalfe-Helmar, Dennis Meiners, Mary Irvine, Kirby Day, Rod Swope

#### **City and Borough of Juneau Staff**

Caryl McConkie, Tourism Coordinator

#### **Members of the Public**

Robin Phillips, Margot Knuth, Paulette Simpson, Bob Jacobsen, Kim Obermeyer, Michael Wilson, John Favro, Susan Favro, John Mazor, Cheryl Easterwood, Gary Mendivil, Tom Kimlinger, Merry Ellefson, David Hawes, Joel Weytte, Kenwyn George, Kristin Ireng, Karen Hansen, Rory Darling, Jan Moyer, Denice McPerson, Doug Whato, Ken Ward, M'lva Rickey, Marie Darlin, Christa McMullen, Larry Hurlock, Stephen Wright, Bob Janes, Beth Cline, Jim Baumgartner, Bill Johnson, Chip Thoma, Betsy Fischer, Scott Fischer, Mike Windred, Amy Windred, Holly Bierkorte, Elva Bontrager, Jim Bentley, Becky Carls, Gil Howell, Greg O'Claray, Jim Wilson, Dot Wilson, Georgene Davidson, George Davidson, Clarke Damon, Dave Fremming, Laurie Thorpe, Delbert Carney, Constance Carney, Ray Preston, Robert Garrison, Mike Rawson, Iola Young, Tom Aberle, Jan Somerville, Kevin Tillotson, Pete Griffin, Patty Ware, Margo Waring, Dennis Harris, Merrill Sanford, Pamela LaBolle, David Summer, Pat Hickok, Bill Hagevig, Patricia McKelvey, Leslie Howell, Diana Donohue, Reecia Wilson, Linda Hay, Malou Wolf, Joe Sonneman, Robert Reges

### **REVIEW**

On February 28, 2000, the Planning and Policy Committee (PPC) and the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) sponsored a public forum to take public input on proposed actions to mitigate the impacts of flightseeing noise on the residents of Juneau. In particular, the committees requested input on two documents: *Draft Voluntary Compliance Measures for the Summer 2000 Tourism Season* and a memo written to the PPC by four City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) staff members that outlined a variety of actions that the CBJ could take to move forward to address the issue. Staff members recommended both short-term and medium-term actions. At a previous meeting, the PPC reviewed the memo and adopted it as a plan of action of how we want to move forward and address this issue, both immediately and in the long-term.

The issue of flightseeing noise is not a new one, nor is the impact it has on citizens of Juneau. The Tourism Advisory Committee conducted two public forums, one on September 21<sup>st</sup> and another on the 26<sup>th</sup>, to better understand the issue and to bring all stakeholders to the table to discuss roles, resources, and potential partnerships that could be formed to address the issue. Following the meetings, Mayor Egan decided that the issue was of such importance that there needed to be an Assembly committee focused on dealing with issues related to tourism and so he created the Planning and Policy Committee. The PPC tackled the issue of flightseeing-generated noise first because that was the issue that had already received the greatest amount of public attention. It was also the issue where the greatest amount of work had been done by the Tourism Advisory Committee in identifying problems and identifying a wide range of possible solutions, many of which needed significant research and evaluation to determine whether or not they could be implemented and in what timeframe they could be implemented. The PPC's primary goal has been to meaningfully and positively impact the quality of people's lives this coming summer in Juneau.

In the course of its research, the committee learned that there was neither sufficient background data, nor a foundation for the CBJ to undertake serious regulatory or legal action. Therefore, the PPC proposed a series of data gathering steps that need to be undertaken in order to provide the foundation for the CBJ to move to a level of regulatory control, should it become necessary. The data gathering tasks are one piece of an entire package

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of solutions the PPC intends to pursue in the next few months and throughout the next year. Other components in the package include working with flightseeing operators to improve the effectiveness of voluntary compliance measures and investigating whether or not satellite heliports or consolidating flightseeing operations at the airport could significantly reduce the noise impact for residents.

The PPC chairman asked speakers to state their names, where they live, and to keep their comments to five minutes. An important part of the process was to hear from all the citizens of Juneau with their many different opinions. Speakers were also asked to provide comments on what the committee could do differently to make the process better or make the outcome better.

## **Public Input**

### ***Bill Johnson, Fritz Cove Road***

Mr. Johnson said he would rather have the CBJ address the noise of barking dogs than the helicopter noise. He also said that the boats with high-tension motors out on Auke Bay disturb him more than the flightseeing planes. Mr. Johnson believes that using regulation instead of voluntary would not be a good step because for one thing, it would be costly to enforce. Even though he is not completely happy with voluntary compliance measures, he does believe the program works. Mr. Johnson also recommended that the CBJ collect the necessary information that can be used as a background for the efforts to reduce noise.

### ***Chip Thoma, Downtown Juneau***

Mr. Thoma does not believe that voluntary measures go to the main problem of noise and that they do not discuss the obvious alternative, a decrease in flights. He says that flightseeing in Juneau has reached a saturation level and growth in the number of flights should not occur. Mr. Thoma is against the development of satellite heliports and said that the proposal does nothing except create another heliport. He also said that the committees have not offered any meaningful alternatives to aircraft noise, only promises and inferences that are, in fact, cover for more noise through growth.

### ***Betsy Fisher, Airport District***

Ms. Fisher thanked the flightseeing operators for being good citizens and neighbors in their efforts to deal with the growing pains of the expanding visitor industry. She said that during the summer she notices the air tours and the other air traffic throughout the day, but they do not bother her. She labeled those particular aircraft sounds as "the sounds of summer." She believes that the growing pains the community is experiencing are good ones and that the community needs a vital economic base in order to continue to be a good place to live. She said the people who run the summer air tours are neighbors and friends and that the community should give them respect and support for choosing to live and do business in Juneau.

### ***Scott Fisher, Airport District***

Mr. Fisher said he has been transported by helicopter and floatplane to numerous otherwise inaccessible areas of Southeast Alaska. He said he enjoys living near the airport for its close proximity to a number of the helicopter flight services and the floatplane pond. He believes that those people associated with the helicopter and floatplane businesses are concerned, community-minded service providers, employers and at times, invaluable lifesavers to the people of Juneau. Mr. Fisher said that with voluntary compliance by flight services, useful guidelines provided by the Assembly Planning and Policy Committee, and the aid of the Tourism Advisory Committee, the flight services in Juneau can continue to provide access to the wonders of Alaska with an acceptable impact to our neighborhoods.

### ***Holly Bierkortte, Wings of Alaska***

Ms. Bierkortte said that the flightseeing industry has provided stable and rewarding employment for many people. She said that Wings of Alaska is working to improve the atmosphere for everybody involved. She said that

Wing's tourism-related business makes it possible for the company to provide year-round essential flight service to the community and nearby communities and villages. With respect to voluntary compliance measures, she said it is important to remember that Wing's has made progress. Ms. Bierkorte said that even though cruise ship passenger arrivals have increased by over 300 percent in the last 10 years, downtown floatplane passenger boardings have grown only seven percent. She said that individual departures have actually decreased, due to the fact that the company is using larger aircraft and working cooperatively with the voluntary compliance system. Ms. Bierkorte said that Wings pledges to the community that the company will continue to investigate the feasibility of quieter technology. She emphasized that the community means everything to Wing's employees and believes that through cooperation, communication, and understanding, people can coexist here in this beautiful part of the world.

***Becky Carls, Fritz Cove Road***

Ms. Carls said she is glad to see the proposed changes in the voluntary compliance guidelines for the 2000 tour season, and that they indicate willingness on the part of the operators to try to work with the citizens of Juneau. However, she remains skeptical that they will have much impact on the levels of noise many citizens experience.

Ms. Carls said it would be helpful to have two large numbers or a number and a letter on the bottom of each aircraft so the individual planes causing problems could be readily identified. She would also like to see the operators monitor their pilots after training occurs. Ms. Carls requested that since the tour operators are going to increase coordination efforts among themselves, all operators could also agree to overfly a neighborhood no more than three times per hour.

She said it would be helpful if the public had one place or person who could take complaints and make citizens believe that someone was listening to their concerns and taking action on them. Ms. Carls said that ideally, citizens should be able to call or e-mail in a problem and be assured an appropriate response would take place.

In addition, Ms. Carls said she would not like to see flightseeing operations that are not consolidated at the airport unless the number of flights is greatly reduced. She is however, a proponent of heliports, with the following stipulations: (1) All helicopter flightseeing operations depart and return to the heliports by 7:00 p.m., except for the initial and final flights of the day, and (2) The heliport does not increase the noise at all in any nearby residential areas beyond the initial and final flights of the day. The best way to decrease the noise levels is to decrease the number of flightseeing tours which are conducted over the course of the summer.

Ms. Carls final recommendations were to rollback the number of flights landing on the glacier to the 1994 level of 11,647 per year and make Saturdays a flight-free day to give operational people and machines a rest and the rest of the citizens a break. She believes that the CBJ may have the authority to fill all of these requests.

***Gil Howell, Temsco Helicopters***

Mr. Howell said that Temsco Helicopters contributes substantially to the local economy in the form of sales tax revenue, local purchasing, and the employment of local, tax-paying, purchasing citizens. He said that Temsco Helicopters operates year-round, but that the Juneau base depends heavily upon the summer seasonal tour operations to subsidize year-round operations. Mr. Howell said that tourism-generated business sustains operations while providing charter services for the local businesses that depend on helicopters to provide necessary services for all of Juneau including electricity, cellular telephone services, and emergency radio communication. He asked the committees not to forget that Temsco provides emergency medical and search and rescue services to Juneau and all of the other rural communities dependent on aviation in one form or another.

Mr. Howell also reminded the committees that Juneau is a town that is becoming increasingly dependent upon tourism for its livelihood and that tourism joins other industries that have been discouraged in the past such as timber, mining, government. He also said that the public owns the Tongass National Forest, not just the residents living near the boundaries of the public lands. He said that Temsco Helicopters provides access to the public lands for those who normally wouldn't have the time or ability to access it on foot. He said that Temsco has

changed its aircraft fleet, hours of operation, flight routes, and altitudes and reiterated the company's commitment to continue to revise flight routes and altitudes and to try and come to neutral ground. Mr. Howell said that the company must maintain economic viability, however it will continue looking at satellite heliports and quiet technology as it becomes available

***George Davidson, Lena Loop Road***

Mr. Davidson said that statements contained within the material he received from the CBJ, combined with his own previous experience, leads him to conclude that there is very little legally that the Assembly can do to control this matter, if in fact it needs controlling. He said that if there are changes that need to be made, the only reasonable approach to accomplish those changes is through voluntary compliance. Mr. Davidson said it was important to protect and encourage the visitor industry, because the future of state and federal jobs in Juneau is not a bright one, and the tourism industry is the only one economic engine that can help Juneau residents look to the future with some hope. He complimented the flightseeing operators for the changes they have voluntarily made towards minimizing the noise impacts. He said that those changes came with a price tag, that only their businesses paid.

***Dot Wilson, Airport Area***

Mrs. Wilson pointed out that when six people fly to the glacier in a helicopter, it creates a number of Juneau jobs. For example, she said that tour flights require a pilot to fly, a scheduler or dispatcher to take their order, a bookkeeper to record it, a driver to pick them up and drop them off, a loader to brief and help them into the helicopter, a mechanic to see that the helicopter is properly maintained, and someone to fuel the helicopters when they need fuel. She said these are even people who contribute to Juneau's economy and are not unemployed or on welfare.

In addition, Mrs. Wilson said there are six passengers who share ownership of the Tongass National Forest, and most of them are not athletes and some barely or rarely walk anywhere. She said that the only opportunity they have to stand on the ice field is to be helicoptered to the site and that they are also very lucky, because many Americans never get that chance.

Mrs. Wilson said that voluntary compliance guidelines need to be left to people who understand the safety aspects. She also is afraid that if the helicopters are gone, people will want the trails closed to public use, and stop whale watching, and stop charter flights. She believes that the nice new shops on South Franklin, that pay a lot of property tax, will have to close since no ships will come to Juneau because there won't be anything to do while they're here. Mrs. Wilson asks citizens to realize that they live in a community with other people where nothing is perfect and that they all need to make compromises. She said the helicopter and fixed-wing operators are making an effort to meet the needs of the people most bothered by noise. She said that Juneau is her home, and that they want to be good neighbors.

***Joe Sonneman, Downtown Juneau***

Mr. Sonneman talked about noise and other problems such as air pollution, traffic congestion and safety. He said these problems are starting to affect an industry that has grown enormously in recent years. He said too many ships cause the problem with air pollution for too long a period of time and that the problem with noise comes from having too many passengers. Mr. Sonneman estimates that the right level of Juneau's carrying capacity is about 500,000 visitors and believes it is necessary to control the number of tourists (principally the cruise ship passengers) to get to the root of the problem. He said the CBJ should control the number of visitors by closing the Port of Juneau on Saturdays. Mr. Sonneman said that by giving Juneauites one day a week off, it would ensure the industry's long-term survival, reduce the hostility level and allow citizens to cooperate in a much better way.

***Clarke Damon, Douglas***

Mr. Damon was concerned about the danger being created by the floatplanes taking off and heading down the channel. He said he has noted many close calls where planes and boats were getting awfully close together. He

said that the only solution he could recommend was to move the airplanes out to the airport or take them off in some other direction. Mr. Damon referred to the proposed voluntary compliance that said helicopter traffic and floatplane traffic (returning) would fly 500' feet higher than the currently allowed altitude. He said he does not object to the operations when they are higher than 500'. Finally, Mr. Damon said he objects to giving the flightseeing operators tax incentives and low-cost loans, unless outboard motors would fall into the same category.

***Dave Fremming, Douglas***

Mr. Fremming said he continues to try and convince the CBJ's governing body to remember that Juneau is Alaska's third largest city and that it cannot be reduced to the pristine wilderness that some people seem to desire and still sustain the city's population. He said it is necessary to preserve what little there is left of the fragile economy that sustains the citizenry. He also said that helicopter noise is a wonderful sound of commerce.

Mr. Fremming did not think that the public forum to comment on voluntary compliance measures was necessary because if the measures were to be voluntary, the only ones who could voluntarily comply with them were the operators.

***Del Carnes, Airport Area***

Mr. Carnes commented on previous voluntary compliance measures and said that it his understanding that the helicopters taking off from the airport and flying west were suppose to stay parallel to the runway until they crossed the river and then made their turn to whatever direction they were headed. However, he said that most often, the pilots would severely cut the corner and fly over the sewer plant and part of the residential area (both going out to their sites and then coming back). He said that when the pilots deviate from the path, it impacts the residents that live in the area.

Mr. Carnes also talked about fixed-wing aircraft and said that when the weather is clear and the winds are out of the west, the pilots take off over the Juneau-Douglas Bridge and make their turn in the vicinity of Aurora Harbor, most often at a very low altitude. But most often they come right over Aurora Harbor at a very low altitude and make a deafening sound. He said he agreed with an idea that had been mention earlier about publishing a list of the aircraft numbers that provided information about the flight service to which the aircraft belonged, because sometimes the helicopter companies have different colored aircraft from year-to-year. A list of the numbers would help people know who to contact with a complaint.

***Ray Preston***

Mr. Preston said the committee had fallen short in terms of addressing or alleviating the problem for the coming tourist season and thereafter. He said that he was disappointed that the only solutions the committee was offering the public were voluntary compliance and satellite heliports. Specifically, Mr. Preston said he was disappointed with the voluntary guidelines because he couldn't see that the operators were making a sacrifice and that the proposed additions would provide no improvement, did not represent a change, or meant nothing to him. He said the operators should agree not to fly before 9:00 a.m. in the morning and not have any operations after 5:00 p.m. at night so citizens can have the evening hours.

With regard to investigating places for future heliports, he asked the PPC why it would be any kind of solution to make allowances for even more helicopters, more flights, and more noise. He warned the PPC that it was going down the path of exacerbating the problem, not making it better.

Mr. Preston's recommendations to make things better included reducing and controlling the number of flights, establishing curfews, and a flight-free day. He disagreed with the notion that the city is helpless and legally powerless to do anything about the problem because of federal jurisdiction or federal preemption. He said that there are steps the city can take and that if there is a legal challenge, the city might lose, but then again it might win.

When questioned specifically about one of the proposed changes for the 2000 tourism season, Mr. Preston said that if the Otters were 500' higher in altitude, it might make a difference. He said he'd like to see if there would be a difference, but that it hadn't happened before.

In a final point, Mr. Preston said that citizens who have lived in Juneau for some length of time, put up with a lot of lousy weather just to get a few good months in the summer and a few good days outside. He said that has been taken away.

***Margo Waring, Douglas***

Ms. Waring said she did not see much in the suggested voluntary compliance standards that would make a difference. She said most of what is there has been there before and hasn't worked. She said one of the reasons it hasn't worked (and why anything new won't work either) is that none of the changes deal with times when the weather is bad. Ms. Waring also said she didn't see anything in voluntary compliance that addresses the concerns people have about hours of operation. She said that flightseeing shouldn't start before 8:00 a.m. and that the rest of the business shouldn't be crammed into the hours that are convenient for the cruise ships because citizens end up listening to helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft sounds when they are trying to sleep.

Ms. Waring said there are things that can be done aside from waiting for new technology. She does not favor satellite heliports if they allow the number of helicopters to increase. She is concerned that the heliports would just distribute the noise burden around in a different configuration. Ms. Waring said the CBJ should coordinate with the Forest Service so that we don't get more helicopters flying longer distances to different landing places. She also recommended that the Assembly take the following actions: (1) Write to the Forest Service and request that they look at where landings occur and look at the numbers of permits being given, (2) Formalize a resolution asking the airport board to regulate helicopter traffic at the airport, (3) Write to the Federal Aviation Administration and explain the situation and ask them what we can do to initiate a process that will control the flights of aircraft outside of the airport area to achieve a higher level of safety for the citizens.

***Dennis Harris, Downtown Juneau***

Mr. Harris said he almost did not attend the public forum because he does not believe anything will change. He cited a number of reasons why he believes nothing will happen. He said drivers still park or stop vehicles or disembark passengers on bridges all the time, drive empty buses down 12<sup>th</sup> Street, drive buses during the noon hour on Calhoun Avenue, and idle their engines all over the place. He said that these actions are all voluntary compliance measures that have been in effect for four years; operators are still not complying with them. Mr. Harris said he doesn't expect the cruise vessels to comply with the marine vessel emissions standards either, unless someone is there to write citations. He believes the same thing applies to the flightseeing voluntary compliance measures and that the CBJ is long past the point where it needs regulation. Mr. Harris said there should be regulations on the numbers of people who visit, and that the city should shut the port down one or two or three days a week to do it if necessary.

Mr. Harris said he remembers when the waterfront had an average of about three or four flights an hour from Alaska Coastal. He said people didn't complain about it then because it had been going on ever since the end of World War II, but it was not for tourism and it was not for flightseeing. Mr. Harris said that was the way people got to Sitka, Petersburg, Hoonah, Gustavus, Haines or Skagway. He said that things are different now, and that it is a luxury, not a necessity, to fly out of downtown with floatplanes.

***Mike Windred, Twin Lakes***

Mr. Windred commented on the process and said it was an important process. He said he attends many meetings and sometimes is frustrated when what he hears is, "It's never quite good enough." He said that no matter what compromises the industry comes up with, they will never be quite good enough for some people. Mr. Windred said that ultimately compromise is what everyone should be looking for.

Mr. Windred said he likes the voluntary compliance measures that relate to helicopter issues. He said that voluntary compliance does not come without impact to the operator and eventually secondary impacts will result such as lost revenue to the city and to employees, as well as revenue to support businesses such as fuel and the carpenters that are hired to get things ready for the summertime. Mr. Windred said that even though voluntary compliance has its impacts, he thinks the operators are willing to live with the impacts because they know it's good for the community, their neighbors, and for all who live here

Mr. Windred also supports gathering the information to find out whether or not satellite heliports would help the situation. He also commented on the idea that taking one day off a week would improve safety in the helicopter industry. He said that the flightseeing industry is regulated for how many hours operators and flights people can work and that no one is more worried about safety than the owners and operators of the flightseeing aircraft.

***Robert Reges, Douglas***

Mr. Reges delivered five specific recommendations to the committees that pertained to the Assembly's action items to address flightseeing noise. First, he said that he thinks the PPC is off to a good start to hire an acoustic consultant to monitor sound levels and asked that citizens be included in the data-gathering group. He said citizens could be trained in data collection processes, and with their help, there would be more data points and statistically more significant information.

Secondly, Mr. Reges said he wholeheartedly agrees that there needs to be economic incentives to business people to make decisions that perhaps are not business-based. Specifically, he said the incentives should include a break in the personal property tax for those operators who either upgrade an existing noisy machine or replace an existing noisy machine, a leveling of the property tax field, and a revolving loan fund specifically for and only for the purpose of buying quieter aircraft or taking your currently noisy aircraft and upgrading them.

Mr. Reges's third recommendation was that the CBJ should not allow non-conforming uses to expand. He referred to a proposal that Wings of Alaska has in front of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Division of Governmental Coordination to upgrade and expand the Merchant's Wharf facility. He said the PPC should write to the Division of Governmental Coordination and tell them about the comprehensive review the CBJ is undertaking regarding noise control. He said that we should tell the State of Alaska not to permit an increase in investment in a non-conforming use, because it will be difficult to move that use out to the airport or a satellite facility if too much investment is made in existing facilities.

In his fourth recommendation, Mr. Reges said he favors the idea of looking at satellite heliports and the city should continue with four suggestions: (1) Become familiar with and acknowledge the plans that this community has put together over the years, (2) The CBJ should own the facilities so that the city retains power to regulate the number and frequency of takeoffs and landings and the hours of operations, (3) Any satellite heliports should be in lieu of existing facilities. (4) Coordinate with the Forest Service and perhaps the FAA.

Finally, Mr. Reges asked the PPC to research the idea of zoning amortization. He said there are many cases out there that establish a city can take a facility that currently exists and tell it it's not going to be in business at that place at some future point in time.

***Patricia McKelvey, Downtown***

Ms. McKelvey talked about some of the good aspects of her flightseeing employer. She talked about giving people experiences they had never had before and also about the fact that her employer operates all year and does medivacs and contracts. Ms. McKelvey said that the helicopters and floatplanes are an industry and they bring money to our city and giving jobs to college students. She said she was born and raised in Juneau and she doesn't hear the planes or the helicopters and has no problems with them whatsoever.

***Pamela LaBolle, West Juneau***

Ms. LaBolle spoke in support of the voluntary compliance guidelines. She said she has always enjoyed the sounds of a busy, industrious harbor in the summer. She said that she and her husband eat nearly all of their meals on their deck, rain or shine, and intermingled with dinner conversation are the sounds of the floatplanes, helicopters, Alaska Airlines, motorboats, ravens, eagles, lots and lots of eagle sounds. She said that those are the sounds of summer.

Ms. LaBolle also talked about the fact that growth has brought the city increased shopping opportunities, fresh fruits and vegetables and other good things. She said that having Juneauites work together and be considerate of others' needs and concerns is and will be the best approach to dealing with growth. She believes that the voluntary compliance guidelines, developed in cooperation with the flight operators, are the kind of approach that is reasonable for addressing this issue.

***Rory Darling, North Douglas***

Mr. Darling said the committees should not rely on voluntary compliance as it existed last year. He said that voluntary compliance does not work, and one reason is because the operators have no disincentive to violate the rules. He said he firmly support the idea of a curfew and the idea of a helicopter-free day. Mr. Darling said he believes that the industry has taken over the town without any input from the town. He added that the city should be talking about reduction because that would be the only meaningful thing that would be meaningful to him.

Mr. Darling said he is anti-noise but not anti-tourist and resents implications that if he is anti-noise, he is not pro-Juneau. He said he wants to be reasonable, but says that unless he sees some reasonable action, he will become radical and oppose the industry. He said the city is forcing people to take one side or the other, and he doesn't think that is what the leaders want for the community. He said he doesn't want it, and thinks the tourism industry is the cause of the problem.

***M'Iva Rickey, Douglas***

Ms. Rickey said she is concerned about voluntary compliance because she has watched how the city handles the bus turn-around near her home. She said the bus turn-around was supposed to be just a turn-around, but drivers sit there an half an hour for their lunches. She asked if someone does something by voluntary compliance, where would the enforcement be. She said there should be a leveling kind of experience or a little bit more management or maybe there's different equipment. She does not want to see our wonderful community pit one neighborhood against another. There are lots of options, but to pit one neighborhood against another isn't solving anybody's problem and it polarizes a community, bringing about a negative result of anti-tourism. She does not want to be part of going there and she thinks there are lots of people that might have issues, but are still very pro-tourist.

***Steve Wright, Thane***

Mr. Wright said he is skeptical that the changes proposed for the year 2000 operating season will make a significant difference. On the other hand, he said he thought that voluntary compliance is worthwhile and encouraged the industry to live up to the bargain it had made with the citizens of Juneau. He also thinks there will come a point where the city will have to consider adopting regulations. Mr. Wright said he believes that the overall numbers of flightseeing tours has exceeded the saturation point and that they should either be reduced or maintained at the current levels. He said he supports shorter hours of operation and a curfew.

Mr. Wright said he supports the minimum altitudes that the operators outlined in the proposed changes in the voluntary compliance measures, but said that one point being overlooked is the fact that of 40 to even 50 percent of the total numbers of flights occur during low weather conditions. Mr. Wright also said the idea of satellite heliports is a good one but to keep in mind that there are neighborhoods outside of the downtown, Douglas, and valley areas where people have moved to get away from the hustle and bustle of the population. He said those are the people who seem to be impacted the most.



In a final observation, Mr. Wright said there appears to be a perception that a vocal minority of residents are complaining about aircraft noise and that it's incumbent upon those people to adapt or tolerate disruptions because they're the minority. He said that attitude is unacceptable and believes that the industry should be the ones adapting to the citizens' concerns, because it's the citizens who are being impacted.

***Bob Janes, Douglas***

Mr. Janes commented on the fact that the committees must realize that finding solutions will not be easy and it will take time. He said he thinks the community is going in the right direction and that voluntary compliance can work. He said he believes the operators want to be good operators and good neighbors. He also said there are a lot of communities in the country and around the world that would give anything to be in the position of struggling with the issues of dealing with a great economy in terms of tourism. Mr. Janes said it would be easy to get pulled down by some of the negativity in the community and that it tends to make one feel that what they're doing is not aimed at an end. He encouraged the committees to stay positive.

Mr. Janes said the flightseeing operators in Juneau are among the best in the world and are working with the community. He said he supports investigating satellite heliports and thinks there are other options for cruise ship schedules. Mr. Janes said there are all kinds of things that the community can do to keep itself vibrant and at the same time, give citizens a reason to like the fact that the industry is in Juneau doing business.

***Margot Knuth, Twin Lakes***

Ms. Knuth likened public comment to that in the legislative forum, where every person who does contact the legislature with a problem is representing 12 or 20 people who don't make the effort. She said she is not anti-tourism and she loves her community, but that there isn't any moderation anymore.

Because of her position working with the State at a policy level, Ms. Knuth said she likes to think that she has a very comprehensive, broader view. She said she was mortified to admit that when somebody said they might move operations over to Douglas, she actually felt like saying, "Please do it and get it out of my backyard!" Ms. Knuth said she didn't want to be that type of person. She said that moderation would mean setting time limits. She said that things have gone too far and that there needs to be a reduction.

***Jim Baumgartner, Twin Lakes***

Mr. Baumgartner said he would like to see further voluntary support to replace the noisy helicopters that are currently flying over our residents with ones that are less noisy. He said he has noticed a commitment to avoid residential neighborhoods, and yet, the Twin Lakes neighborhood where he lives is subject to noise all summer long. He said he is pleased to see that there are measures to increase the height over residential areas in the upcoming year. In addition, Mr. Baumgartner said he supports the flights ending at 7:00 p.m. and would like to see some changes to reduce the hours of the current overflights. He also said he believes that the Forest Service has provisions that require that flightseeing activities avoid bald eagle nests by a 1,500-foot buffer. He said he doesn't think operators are complying with that in the Twin Lakes area. Otherwise, Mr. Baumgartner said he supports the voluntary compliance measures and would like to see more done with them in the Twin Lakes area.

***Jim Bentley, West Juneau***

Mr. Bentley said he does not believe that regulation is going to work. He said the CBJ has quite a few notable regulations on the books right now, and that the city does not enforce those. He said he doesn't think the city needs another regulation on the books and that one to regulate flightseeing would be very difficult to enforce. Mr. Bentley also said he appreciates the voluntary compliance and that if anything is working (and he said it is some,) voluntary compliance might work to a certain extent. He suggested that the current operations might be at the point where he would like a freeze placed on the number of flights and the number of tourists. Mr. Bentley believes that arresting the growth rate until the community could get a handle on the situation would be very desirable. He said he would not ask for a decrease, he just doesn't want to see further increases in the problem.

***Phil Greeney, Old Glacier Highway***

Mr. Greeney said he owns a bed and breakfast on the channel and that his business is severely being impacted by noise. He said he doesn't have a problem with people making money the best way they can, but it shouldn't infringe on anybody else's ability to do the same.

Mr. Greeney said that if we lived in the best of all possible worlds, he thinks voluntary compliance would be fine. But he says we live in the real world and voluntary compliance goes against a people's personal versus business hierarchy of needs. He said he believes it is not in the operators' best interest to comply overall, so he thinks regulations are necessary.

Mr. Greeney referred back to a meeting he attended on flightseeing noise in September and said that two things impressed him: there was no place to go to get away from the noise and the noise was pervasive and was affecting every aspect of people's lives. He said it was the responsibility of the elected officials to do something about the noise and to bring relief to people.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.