

Subject: Concern Regarding Helicopter Noise and TBMP Guidelines

I am writing to express my concern regarding the increasing helicopter noise during the summer tour season. I live near the airport and understand that I should expect to hear planes taking off and landing daily. However, the incessant helicopter noise has become increasingly disruptive and, at times, unbearable.

There are currently two operators using the airport for arrivals and departures, and they often come in and leave in groups. On busy ship days, the noise can be constant. When Thunder Mountain is obscured, I understand that a third operator may also fly over the area.

I reviewed the TBMP guidelines and understand that helicopter operators are expected to operate between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. daily. I am curious whether this is simply a good-faith agreement, as I have personally witnessed flights departing after 7:00 p.m.

I contacted TBMP earlier this summer because of these concerns, but unfortunately, I came away feeling that there was little interest in listening to or understanding the concerns of local residents. When I asked about operators flying after 7:00 p.m., I was told that it was probably a local job and that the operator would be asked about it. I agreed to that, and I was subsequently copied on the email exchange. However, TBMP indicated to the operator that I had “pressed” the issue, which was not the case. I simply answered yes when asked whether I wanted the matter addressed. The interaction left me feeling as though my concern was unreasonable simply for bringing it forward.

The TBMP guidelines also indicate that helicopters should stay away from Spaulding Meadows. I hiked to the John Muir Cabin twice this summer, and on both occasions helicopters flew directly overhead. This raises concerns about whether the current guidelines are being followed and, if so, whether they are sufficient to protect the experience of residents and visitors.

As residents, we deserve peace, quiet, and a reasonable quality of life. Many of us choose to live in Alaska because of its natural beauty, quiet, and outdoor environment. The constant helicopter noise is intrusive, disruptive, and negatively affects our ability to enjoy our homes and outdoor spaces.

I understand that the FAA has jurisdiction over flight plans and airspace, but I believe the current situation warrants further discussion and review. Residents should be able to enjoy the summer months and spend time outside without the constant noise pollution—even if we live near an airport.

Specifically, I would appreciate clarification on the following:

- Are the 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. operating hours an enforceable requirement, or are they voluntary guidelines that operators are simply encouraged to follow?
- Are helicopter operators required to avoid flying over or near Spaulding Meadows, and if so, how is compliance with that guideline monitored?

- Given the increasing volume of helicopter traffic during the summer tour season, is there an opportunity to review or strengthen the existing TBMP guidelines?
- What mechanisms are available for residents to raise ongoing concerns and have them meaningfully considered by TBMP and the operators?

I would welcome the opportunity for the members of VITF to visit my home on a Sunday afternoon and experience firsthand the level of helicopter noise I am describing. I believe hearing it from a residential setting would provide valuable perspective on the impact this activity is having on those of us who live here.

I understand that helicopter operators provide an important service and that tourism is an important part of our community. My concern is not with the existence of helicopter operations, but with the **frequency, timing, and cumulative impact of the noise on residents and the surrounding environment**. I hope we can find a reasonable balance that allows operators to conduct their business while also respecting the quality of life and outdoor experience of the surrounding community.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these concerns. I look forward to your response and to understanding what steps can be taken to address these issues.

Sincerely,

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