Honorable Supervisor Kuehl,

The Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, Inc., founded in 1952 and representing 42 resident and homeowner associations spanning the Santa Monica Mountains, supports the continued documenting of helicopter noise. At our June 18, 2019 board meeting, The Federation approved a motion to support funding provided by the County for a county-wide helicopter noise complaint system, similar to what existed from May 2015 until July 2018. The estimated cost is $50,000 and provides valuable benefits to the public.

Helicopter pilots nearly always fly under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and are bound by no minimum altitudes. Some of the worst “hot spots” for noisy, low-flying helicopters are within District 3, largely due to non-essential tour helicopters. The hillside residential communities of the Santa Monica Mountains are disproportionately impacted due to their beauty, as well as the venues within them such as the Hollywood Sign.

The FAA has been unwilling to regulate helicopters routes or minimum altitudes. As it is, the only means for affecting improvement in pilot behavior is through voluntary measures and practices. Best practices, such as “Fly Friendly,” are mostly disregarded. The Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition (LAAHNC) is a dedicated group who have been corroborating with the pilots, pilot associations, agencies (such as LA County Sheriff and Fire Departments), and FAA. They are committed to continue seeking resolutions to the noise problem on the ground, via the only means available, voluntary cooperation.

Besides creating noise over sensitive residential, recreational and wildlife areas, industry experts agree that low-flying helicopters pose a higher risk of catastrophic crash in the case of mechanical failure. This is especially true over the rugged Santa Monica Mountains region.

A helicopter complaint system is necessary to document egregious helicopter flights and promote low-impact, safe flying. We hope that funding can be provided soon, as your constituents already miss having a fully-functioning system.

Sincerely,

Charley Mims

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