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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wainscott, NY (February 25, 2013) – The Quiet Skies Coalition has just learned that the FAA, months ago, classified the East Hampton Airport not as a “local” facility, but as a ‘Regional Airport’, the second highest of four categories of General Aviation Airports. According a May 2012 FAA report, entitled “General Aviation Airports: A National Asset”, the top category is “National Airports” while the lower two are “Local” and “Basic”. By comparison, the four heliports in Manhattan are not classified at all, although they all, like East Hampton, are considered “General Aviation Airports”.

Although the designation of the East Hampton airport as “Regional” appears in an appendix to the May FAA report, neither airport management nor Town Board airport liaison, Councilman Dominick Stanzione, has made that designation public.

Kathleen Cunningham, Chairwoman of QSC, today announced that the document was found on the FAA website. “I am shocked”, she said, “that our local airport is seen by Washington as regional. I note that the document including that determination defines ‘regional airports’, in part, as ‘always in a metropolitan area’ where ‘jet and turboprop flying is prominent’ and includes ‘international flying’. These are hardly appropriate descriptions of our airport or our community.

“This development clearly demonstrates the FAA’s aggressive expansionist view of the East Hampton Airport. It is also consistent with the recent establishment of the airport control tower and Councilman Stanzione’s current effort to make the tower permanent. One wonders what part this new designation played in Mr. Stanzione’s oft-mentioned ‘dialogue with the FAA.’”

The FAA website advises that the May 2012 report was intended to support the part of FAA regulations relating to “airport operating certificates”, which “serve to ensure safety in air transportation”. That regulation (14 CFR Part 139) imposes airport safety standards on, for example, firefighting and rescue equipment, conditions of pavement, markings, lighting, signs, abutting shoulders, and safety areas. According to the website, updated most recently on 12 February 2013, East Hampton, while designated regional, has not yet become “certificated” as such.

“The obvious implication of all of this,” Ms. Cunningham added, “is that safety standards for a regional airport will be stiffer and more expensive to comply with than for a local or basic airport. We do not know where East Hampton may stand in the certification process, but such added expense, like the added expense of operating a permanent control tower, will feed Mr. Stanzione’s argument for the need to take FAA funding and 20 more years of restrictive grant assurances.”

Ms. Cunningham went on to point out that this new development “belies the claims of airport interests that they do not seek expansion of the airport and the ever increasing noise it will inflict on East End residents. By conspiring to seek and create a need for FAA funding, they plan to hamstring the Town for 20 more years with grant assurances that will guarantee endless expansion and block any effective noise mitigation.”

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Executive Committee: Kathleen Cunningham, *Chairperson* Charles Ehren, *Vice Chairperson*

Vincent Covello, Patricia Currie, John Kirrane, Stephen Levine, Susan McGraw Keber, T. James Matthews, Dan Rudansky, and Pat Trunzo III