

## **Organizing Quickly**

Wainscott

September 9, 2011

Dear David,

Thank you for The Star's coverage of those who are "tortured and tormented" by aircraft noise in and around East Hampton Airport. This description comes from Senator Charles E. Schumer. "These low-flying helicopters have tortured and tormented Long Island communities for far too long," he said in a joint news release with Congressman Tim Bishop on Dec. 9, 2009. Two years later the problem is worse with no end in sight.

Thank you also for informing the public of the not-for-profit civic action organization, Quiet Skies Coalition, [quietskiescoalition.org](http://quietskiescoalition.org). Q.S.C. is organizing quickly and collaborating with other civic and environmental organizations. One of the immediate efforts of the group is to set the record straight about East Hampton Airport and aircraft operations, to dispel the misinformation being perpetrated by airport interests. A strong emphasis is being placed on the environmental impacts of the airport.

One of the most disturbing pieces of misinformation knowingly propagated by airport management and some East Hampton Town Board members is the claim of reduction of "total operations": landings and takeoffs at the airport. The airport system that generates the data tracks only transponders on aircraft. It is not air traffic control-approved. It is not accurate in generating total operations data. Transponders have an off knob. Private aircraft flying with visual flight regulations are not required to have transponders on to fly into or out of East Hampton Airport. Helicopters have no minimum altitude to be V.F.R.; they must only have visual contact with ground.

Landing fees significantly increased this year. The folks living around the airport will tell you unequivocally airport traffic has increased this year. Airport personnel do not man the airport 24/7. The correct conclusion of the airport data is that more pilots are turning off their transponders. The town collects landing fees by this system that only tracks transponders when they are on. The town is not concerned about lost revenues from landing fees; it would rather take federal taxpayer dollars to subsidize operations at the airport and forfeit local control of the airport. This is preposterous. This is fiscal mismanagement.

Imagine we woke up one day to find East Hampton Town owning a huge marina. All local

residents didn't pay slip fees; operations were subsidized by local tax dollars and federal taxpayers. The visiting multimillion-dollar yachts' fees are also subsidized by local and federal tax dollars. Because federal dollars were accepted to subsidize marine operations, the federal government has control over everything that goes on at the marina but it does not have a presence nor does it enforce things like speed limits, Jet Skis, or out-of-control teenagers terrorizing surrounding areas in boats. The town board just wrings its hands, shrugs its shoulders, and says, "There is nothing we can do." Yet it pledges to take more federal taxpayer money and continue to cede control to the feds. That would be outrageous. That would be inconceivable. No, that would be East Hampton Airport!

Are you telling me that Ira Rennert, who owns two helicopters, one being a huge 19-passenger, \$32 million Sikorsky S-92A Helibus, can't pony up enough money to make sure the airport he uses doesn't need to be on the federal taxpayer's back? Why are the rich being subsidized by federal money? How about starting at East Hampton Airport for federal spending cuts?

If this upsets voters, then they will vote for candidates this year that support better fiscal management, the airport being self-sufficient and not taking one more dollar from the federal government. Perhaps The East Hampton Star can do an informative article to ferret out the positions of the candidates on this topic. It seems the Republican Party in East Hampton is upside down on this issue. The Republicans, who generally are more libertarian, wish to take F.A.A. money and cede control to the federal government; it seems counterintuitive.

FRANK DALENE

Vice Chairman

Quiet Skies Coalition