

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 28, 2019

Mr. Stephen Dickson
c/o U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Dickson,

As the Senate considers your nomination to be the next administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), we seek answers regarding your opinion on the challenge of regulating helicopter and airplane noise. We want to share with you the concerns of New Yorkers about the acute problem of excessive helicopter and airplane noise over their communities, and, to that end, we respectfully request answers to a number of questions prior to your confirmation vote. Should the Senate confirm you, we strongly urge you to make addressing aircraft noise a priority.

Communities on the East End of Long Island and in Queens have continuously suffered from the noise of helicopter overflights; these overflights become unbearable for residents during the summer months when air traffic increases exponentially. The East End communities are not the only communities in New York with significant aircraft noise concerns. Our constituents in Queens and Nassau County also continue to experience excessive noise from aircraft overflights. For years, the FAA has failed to adequately address the concerns raised by these communities and provide for real noise mitigation that improves their quality of life. We have repeatedly heard complaints from community groups that the FAA feels inaccessible to them.

The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, which we supported, required the FAA to review the North Shore helicopter route and hold a public hearing for the FAA to hear directly from our constituents; however, the residents of the East End do not feel their opinions have been adequately heard after the FAA's event in Riverhead. It has been more than six months since the public comment period closed on the review of the North Shore helicopter route, and it is our understanding that the FAA is still reviewing the 345 comments it received and does not yet have a timeline established for when the review will be complete and further action will be taken. It is not acceptable that our constituents will be going through yet another summer season without a resolution, including the implementation of an all-water route around Orient Point on the North Shore and a South Shore route over the Atlantic for aircraft bound for the East End of Long Island, to reduce helicopter noise over their homes.

1. Will you commit to quickly finalizing the review of public comments?
2. Will you work with our offices and the relevant stakeholders to develop and enforce an all-water route around Orient Point and Shelter Island on the North Shore, and the creation of a route over the Atlantic Ocean on the South Shore, for aircraft travelling to and from the East End?

3. Will you direct the FAA's Eastern Region to ensure that they are communicating regularly with community groups?
4. What steps will you take to ensure that community noise concerns are fully incorporated into the FAA's planning, enforcement, and decision-making on aircraft operations and flight patterns over populated areas?
5. Will you prioritize providing adequate resources to FAA noise mitigation programs, studies, and projects?

New Yorkers deserve a responsive FAA that works for them and is not held captive by the industries it regulates. To that end, ensuring your commitment to the wellbeing of our constituents, whose quality of life has been impacted for too long by excessive aircraft noise, is extremely important to us. We request that you will provide us with thorough answers to each of these questions without delay. Should you wish to follow-up or discuss this letter in further detail, you may contact our staff.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator