

NATA Hosts Meeting with East Hampton Town Officials

On Friday, NATA hosted a meeting with town officials from East Hampton, New York, to discuss the town's proposal to restrict use of East Hampton Airport (HTO). NATA, joined by representatives of AOPA and NBAA, met with East Hampton Town Supervisor, Larry Cantwell, and Councilwoman Kathee Burke-Gonzalez who serves as liaison with the airport. The meeting provided an opportunity to hear the rationale for the proposed restrictions and express the GA community's concerns from both the national and local perspectives. The Town Board is holding a [public hearing](#) on the proposal this Thursday, March 5, 2015 at 4:30pm. NATA encourages its members potentially impacted by the restrictions to attend the meeting. [More](#)

East Hampton officials told NATA, AOPA and NBAA the proposed legislation is driven by a dramatic spike in noise complaints driven by a new "Uber like" service that has increased weekend helicopter operations from Manhattan to HTO. According to the Town, in 2014 over 25,000 noise complaints were received from 633 East Hampton households. While local officials were complimentary of efforts by the GA community to mitigate noise; sustained operations at those levels will severely impact the town's "product," clean and quiet beaches and surrounding protected lands.

The town is proposing four restrictions on the use of the East Hampton Airport effective May 1st to October 31st with the proposal's impact being reassessed after October 31, 2015:

1. A mandatory nighttime curfew, from 11pm to 7am;
2. An extended curfew on noisy aircraft, from 8pm to 9am;
3. A ban on all helicopters on weekends during the summer season; and
4. A limit on operations by noisy aircraft of one trip (one arrival and one departure) per week during the summer season.

According to Town officials the proposed restrictions would address 74% of all complaints while affecting only 31% of the airport's operations. Local officials disputed the goal of closing the airport, citing a parallel financial plan under development to invest in the airport.

All three associations pointed out that HTO is part of a national system of airports and operational restrictions present a threat well beyond their local community, which is why the FAA requires airports to adhere to grant assurances. NATA also discussed the impact to its members located at, or operating into HTO including; full service fuel providers, flight school services as well as air charter services. These are good paying jobs that the community will not easily replace. Though noting the plan would be reviewed at the end of the season, NATA also warned at that point the "genie would be out of the bottle" and economic dislocations could not easily be remedied.

The Town Board is holding [a public hearing](#) on the proposed legislation on March 5, 2015 at 4:30pm. NATA encourages its members potentially impacted by the proposed restrictions to attend the meeting.

For further information on the proposed legislation, please contact Megan Eisenstein (meisenstein@nata.aero) or visit www.HTOplanning.com