
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING VARIOUS GOVERNMENT ENTITIES TO DEVELOP, UPDATE, AND
INTRODUCE POLICIES RELATED TO HELICOPTER AIR TOURS AT THE
STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL.

1 WHEREAS, the most popular helicopter tour destination on
2 the island of Hawai'i is Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, which
3 recently celebrated its one hundredth anniversary; and
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5 WHEREAS, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is managed by the
6 Director of the National Park Service, which is a bureau of the
7 United States Department of the Interior, and has more non-
8 essential tour helicopter overflights than any other individual
9 park in the nation; and
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11 WHEREAS, in 2015, 14,630 flights within Hawai'i Volcanoes
12 National Park were reported by the helicopter industry; and
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14 WHEREAS, as one of only three national parks that collects
15 air tour fees, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park collected \$356,850
16 in air tour fees in 2014; and
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18 WHEREAS, as of September 2016, up to fourteen helicopter
19 tour companies operated within Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
20 under interim operating authority; and
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22 WHEREAS, helicopter noise as a result of commercial air
23 tour flights over residential areas in the east Hawai'i region of
24 the island of Hawai'i has reached an unprecedented level in
25 recent years; and
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27 WHEREAS, residents in Hāmākua, Hilo, Mountain View, Puna,
28 Volcano, and Ka'u have continued to raise issues of overflights,
29 noise complaints, and safety with the Hawai'i State Department of
30 Transportation, Honolulu Flight Standards District Office of the
31 Federal Aviation Administration, and air tour helicopter
32 operators; and



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2 WHEREAS, the National Parks Overflight Act of 1987 requires
3 a minimum of five thousand feet above ground level altitude over
4 any national park; and
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6 WHEREAS, due to the absence of a congressionally mandated
7 Air Tour Management Plan, some tour operators operating within
8 Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park are allowed to descend to five
9 hundred feet above ground level and as low as two hundred feet
10 above ground level over razorback ridges; and
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12 WHEREAS, these operations are not just a noise issue, but a
13 flight safety issue as well; and
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15 WHEREAS, the Federal Aviation Administration has
16 jurisdiction over all airspace in the country and has the power
17 to regulate all aspects of civil aviation; and
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19 WHEREAS, in 2000, the National Environmental Policy Act, in
20 conjunction with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of
21 2000, required an Air Tour Management Plan to be implemented at
22 various national parks throughout the country; and
23

24 WHEREAS, the objective of an Air Tour Management Plan is
25 "to develop acceptable and effective measures to mitigate or
26 prevent the significant adverse impacts, if any, of commercial
27 air tour operations upon the natural and cultural resources,
28 visitor experiences and tribal lands"; and
29

30 WHEREAS, in 2004, the Federal Aviation Administration and
31 National Park Service asked for comments on an Air Tour
32 Management Plan Environmental Assessment relating to managing
33 commercial air tour overflights at Hawai'i Volcanoes National
34 Park; and
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36 WHEREAS, in 2005, the project was upgraded to an
37 Environmental Impact Statement, and the Federal Aviation
38 Administration published a notice of opportunity for commercial
39 air tour operators granted interim operating authority to review
40 and self-correct annual authorizations; and
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1 WHEREAS, in 2007, a planning team composed of staff from
2 the Federal Aviation Administration, National Park Service, and
3 Volpe National Transportations Systems Center began work on
4 preliminary alternatives for air tour operations over Hawai'i
5 Volcanoes National Park; and

6
7 WHEREAS, in 2008, Federal Aviation Administration and
8 National Park Service staff met with Hawai'i air tour operators,
9 and acoustic monitoring of three sites at Hawai'i Volcanoes
10 National Park was conducted; and

11
12 WHEREAS, in 2011, a preliminary draft Air Tour Management
13 Plan for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park was published,
14 identifying five alternatives for public comment, and three open
15 house public meetings on the draft plan were held in April 2011,
16 in Volcano, Pahoa, and Na'alehu; and

17
18 WHEREAS, seven years later, in 2018, there is still no
19 final Air Tour Management Plan for Hawai'i Volcanoes National
20 Park; and

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22 WHEREAS, additionally, after more than sixteen years, no
23 Air Tour Management Plan for any national park in the nation has
24 been completed; and

25
26 WHEREAS, consequently, the only rules that govern
27 helicopter and fixed wing air tours over the airspace of the
28 Hawaiian islands is the Hawai'i Air Tour Common Procedures
29 Manual, a Federal Aviation Administration document that was
30 issued in 2008; and

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32 WHEREAS, the Hawai'i Air Tour Common Procedures Manual
33 covers rules over all islands and air tour operators that have
34 been granted interim operating authority; and

35
36 WHEREAS, this manual is nearly ten years old, and its rules
37 and prescribed altitudes for overflights over land are unclear;
38 and



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1 WHEREAS, in 2010, the census for the State showed that the
2 island of Hawai'i, particularly east Hawai'i, was the fastest
3 growing region in the State; and
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5 WHEREAS, the population of Puna has reached forty-five
6 thousand residents, and the majority of air tour overflights
7 transit over these residential areas on their way to Hawai'i
8 Volcanoes National Park on a daily basis; and
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10 WHEREAS, additionally, when air tours depart Hawai'i
11 Volcanoes National Park, they typically fly a route toward the
12 waterfall attractions in North Hilo, traveling over Volcano,
13 Mountain View, Waiākea-Uka, Kaumana, North Hilo, Hāmākua, and
14 Honoka'a; and
15

16 WHEREAS, it is essential to achieve a balance between
17 residents and the tour industry that respects the peace and
18 serenity that all residents in east Hawaii should be able to
19 enjoy; and
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21 WHEREAS, visitors that come to Hawai'i Volcanoes National
22 Park from around the world should also be able to enjoy that
23 same peace and tranquility, as well as the precious ecosystems
24 and wildlife that exist in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park; now,
25 therefore,
26

27 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
28 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
29 of 2018, the Senate concurring, that the respective government
30 entities are urged to develop, update, and introduce policies
31 related to helicopter air tours at the state and national level;
32 and
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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federal Aviation
35 Administration is urged to complete the Air Tour Management Plan
36 for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Haleakala, and other
37 designated national parks throughout the nation; and
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39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Department of
40 Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, and Honolulu



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1 Flight Standards District Office are urged to update the nearly
2 decade old Hawai'i Air Tour Common Procedures Manual; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor, Hawai'i State
5 Director of the Transportation, Hawai'i State General Aviation
6 Officer, and Honolulu Flight Standards District Office are urged
7 to work with community stakeholders and the local helicopter
8 tour industry to update air tour flight paths to include a
9 proposed off-shore route, altitudes, reporting procedures, and
10 noise mitigation operations that can alleviate helicopter noise
11 pollution, while also providing the highest level of safety for
12 helicopter tour operators; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawai'i congressional
15 delegation is urged to introduce legislation addressing
16 helicopter tour operations and noise pollution surrounding
17 America's highly populated cities, towns, and communities; and
18

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hawai'i air tour operators are
20 urged to meet with community stakeholders once a quarter to work
21 together to address concerns related to noise complaints and
22 safety issues; and
23

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hawai'i air tour operators are
25 urged to operate helicopter air tours no earlier than sunrise
26 and no later than sunset on normal business days and no earlier
27 than one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset on the
28 weekends and holidays; and
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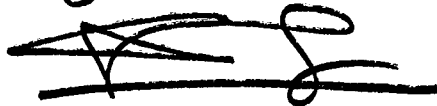
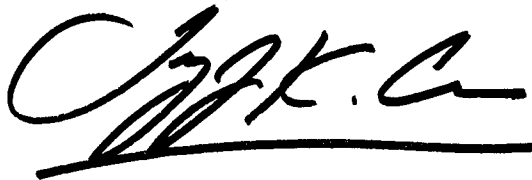

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
31 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Administrator of the
32 Federal Aviation Administration, Director of the United States
33 Department of Transportation, Deputy Director of the National
34 Park Service, Hawaii's congressional delegation, Manager of the
35 Honolulu Flight Standards District Office, Governor of the State
36 of Hawai'i, Hawai'i State Director of Transportation, Hawai'i
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1 State General Aviation Officer, and Hawai'i Helicopter
2 Association.
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OFFERED BY:

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