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RECEIVED  
Date & Time  
Mar 22, 2018, 11:03 am

March 21, 2018

Representative Richard H.K. Onishi, Chair  
Committee on Tourism  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 423  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Representative Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair  
Committee on Transportation  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 423  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Onishi and Aquino, and Committee Members:

**Re: HR 148/HCR 177 Relating to Helicopter Air Tours**  
**Hearing Date: 03-23-18 – 10:00 am; Conference Room 423**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HR 148 and HCR 177.

This HR and HCR are a perfect complement to SB 2474, HD 1 which would require the Department of Health, in collaboration with the Federal Aviation Administration and the Department of Transportation, to conduct a study on the impacts of aviation noise on residents of the State. That bill is presently on its way to Finance and hopefully will be approved and funded.

This noise (and safety) issue is among the most vexing that we face. Helicopters have been a source of endless complaints from communities that lie in the flight path to HVNP, and there should be no doubt that noise can constitute both a nuisance and a health hazard, especially in otherwise tranquil rural areas.

I have met with tour operators and asked them to develop a plan to address noise and safety issues. They have taken some initial steps, and I commend them for that. Moreover, I am hopeful that tour operators and community members can work together. However, the history laid out in HR 148 and HCR 177 is eye-opening. How can our residents be asked to tolerate the status quo when it has been 14 years since the Federal Aviation Administration and National Park Service asked for comments on an Air Tour Management Plan Environmental Assessment, and seven years since a preliminary draft Air Tour Management Plan for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park was published. That is an outrage.

March 21, 2018

Page 2

It cannot go unnoticed that HB 2007, HD 1 is a request from the helicopter industry for a GET exemption on helicopter servicing and maintenance. While that might be thought of as a separate issue, I don't think it would be unfair to say that tax giveaways should be reserved for good corporate citizens. Perhaps the helicopter tour industry's cooperation with HR 148 and HCR 177 should be evaluated before HB 2007 is given any further consideration.

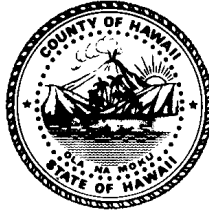
I hope you will approve HR 148 and HCR 177.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Kim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harry Kim  
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

**Maile Medeiros David**  
Council District 6  
Portion N. S. Kona/Ka'ū /Volcano



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## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i  
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Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 23, 2018, 8:44 am

March 22, 2018

Honorable Richard H. K. Onishi, Chair  
Committee on Tourism  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 423  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair  
Committee on Transportation  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 423  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: HR 148/HCR 177 Relating to Helicopter Air Tours  
Hearing Date: 03-23-18 – 10:00 a.m.

Honorable Chair Onishi and Honorable Chair Aquino:

Aloha and mahalo a nui loa for this opportunity to provide testimony with regard to HR 148/HCR 177 Relating to Helicopter Air Tours. My name is Maile David, Councilmember representing Council District 6 (rural districts of South Kona, Ka'ū and Volcano Village). I am a strong supporter of HR 148 and HCR 177 urging governmental agencies to develop, update and introduce policies relating to Helicopter Air Tours.

My office has received complaints from constituents with concerns regarding low flying tour helicopters that occur consistently throughout the day, especially in the Ka'ū and Puna districts. The concerns expressed are not only related to noise but also to impacts upon rights of privacy and quiet enjoyment, health, and safety of our various communities who lie within helicopter tour flight paths.

I fully support the intent of HR 148 and HCR 177 and strongly suggest that no further beneficial actions to the helicopter tour industry be entertained until proper environmental assessments and studies relating to noise, potential health hazards, and adverse impacts upon our native species, are properly determined and assessed. Mahalo a nui loa for your positive and favorable consideration.

Very truly yours,

*Maile David*

Maile David, Council Member  
Council District 6, S. Kona, Ka'ū, and Volcano Village

*Serving the Interests of the People of Our Island  
Hawai'i County Is an Equal Opportunity Provider And Employer*

**1. There are NO established FAA routes for Tour Helicopters.**

Helicopter Tour Co. are in the sightseeing business and charge customers for this service. As a for-profit business their routes are defined by the shortest path between tour destinations to provide the lowest cost fares. Also, the quicker the tour route is completed the more tours are possible per day.

**2. A 1994 study sponsored by the Hawaii Department of Transportation was published by UH Professor Panos Prevedourous.**

This report shows that Helicopter **NOISE** has the **LOUDEST** impact of all types of noise in our community. Fast moving low flying Helicopters on cloudy days over hard terrane produce the greatest degree of noise due to the reflection of the sound between the clouds and hard surfaces.

Helicopter tours customers pay to have a good views. Hawaii is the only state which allows a minimum altitude of 500 feet above ground over residential communities during cloudy weather. Therefore, most of the time they operate at **MINIMUM** altitudes. The pilots want to complete the route quickly, therefore operates at near **MAXIMUM** speeds. Hawaii Island is volcanic and our ground is **HARD**. Also, located at a higher elevations we have more **CLOUDY** then sunny day per year.

Tour Helicopters produce the greatest noise of any other equipment operated in our community due to the nature of their business.

**3. Noise Frequency**

- a. "Noise annoys, awakens, angers and frustrates people" as published in the State of Hawaii (DOH) Noise Reference Manual.

Tour helicopters are not equipped with modern transponders and programs such as Flightaware cannot track their movement.

Based on self-reporting, during 2017 the Hawaii Volcano National Park had more than 15,000 sightseeing overflights and each were charged a park entrance fee. This translates into an average of 80 flights in/out the park daily over residential communities.

We strongly **SUPPORT** bill HCR177, SCR183, SR109, HR148 to develop, update and introduce policies related to Helicopter Air Tours.

Daryl Soares

HICoP



**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 22, 2018, 11:02 am

**HR-148**

Submitted on: 3/21/2018 10:25:02 AM

Testimony for TOU on 3/23/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Julia Contreras	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

THIS BILL NEEDS TO REPRESENT THE NEEDS OF THE TAX-PAYING RESIDENTS OF HAWAII FIRST AND THEN THE TOURIST NEEDS AND PROFIT MARGINS. I and HICoP request that there be respectable and effective legislation to keep helicopters from flying over residents on Hawaii Islands and instead fly over the uninhabited areas and offshore. As a resident, I have been harassed consistently by helicopter noise flying over my property - so loud even when at 1500+ feet elevation, so loud that I cannot carry on conversations, watch tv or listen to music. At this point, I find myself not able to use or enjoy my property because of the helicopter noise! My husband is a VietNam vet and the barrage of helicopter noise also triggers symptoms. All we are asking for is respect for the residents! Thank you!

**HR-148**

Submitted on: 3/21/2018 11:16:16 AM

Testimony for TOU on 3/23/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Brittany Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Helicopter air tours have zero regulation, and they can fly anywhere at any time. I am the wife of a veteran with PTSD that is exacerbated by helicopter overflights, and we just can't get away from them. We have an upwards of 40 overflights per day at our home, and now about 20 on the new property we purchased thinking we were safe. Please vote to urge entities to develop, update, and introduce policies related to helicopter air tours at the state and national level.

**HR-148**

Submitted on: 3/21/2018 6:35:55 PM

Testimony for TOU on 3/23/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Rodney Lover	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Rodney Lover I live at 11\_1491 ALA Rd.Mt. View Hi. I Love Hawaii with all my heart.I came here almost 3 years ago. with my wife daughter.We have 20 acres in the most beautiful rainforest it is pristine in all .Except noise I live next to the airport but no it people with no aloha Sprit it starts before 8 am many days and its 50 60 passes my animals can't hear you talk its horrible just horrible.Please for our island will be paradise for real not just in a picture.Mahalo

**HR-148**

Submitted on: 3/22/2018 1:07:12 PM

Testimony for TOU on 3/23/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nicole Albright	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of this. Representatives Onishi, Fukumoto, Cachola, Ito, LoPresti, Ohno, Woodson, Ward, Aquino, Quinlan, Brower, Hashem, Nakamura, San Buenaventura, and McDermott, please use all of the power afforded you to work with whichever branches of Government necessary to solve the problems of helicopter nuisance and noise pollution on our island home. Please do not stop until this is done.

I used to live in a peaceful neighborhood. We hear the roosters crowing in the morning, listen to the native birds singing. As I write 2 oma'oma'o are dancing in the bushes outside my window. This is also a growing neighborhood. Houses are being built, families are moving in. We have a beautiful new community park and sports center in Pahoia town. Unfortunately our way of life is being degraded and destroyed by the noise from the skies.

I live approximately 20 miles from Hilo airport, there are no established jet flight paths here, yet many days I am subjected to 50-100 LOUD rumbling overflights by tour helicopters. The noise pollution enters my home, one is flying over right now, it distracts my thoughts. Helicopter nuisance starts as early as 6:20 am even on weekends. It wakes me from sleep. Many days there are more than 1 helicopter in the sky at the same time. It takes approximately 2 minutes for the noise of each helicopter to subside, which at a rate of 100 per day amounts to **CONSTANT RUMBLING NOISE** with no breaks or silence. I have lived in busy cities and never have I been subjected to this much un-necessary noise. Often helicopter proponents will state that one helicopter is roughly as loud as a passing car or truck. **THIS IS A LIE**. The noise is louder, longer, deeper, and vibrates my walls. I can hear helicopters from far away on their approach and retreat. Not only that, but it would be a very busy day if one car drove past per hour in my home. This is a peaceful neighborhood. Directly to the south of my neighborhood lies vacant land and a forest reserve, helicopters could fly through the middle which would leave neighborhoods and Pahoia town in peace, yet they choose to take a slightly shorter cut in order for profit.

No land use survey was ever undertaken before helicopters started abusing our skies. This is a taking of massive proportions and my land value suffers. IF flight paths are to be established over real property then this needs to be disclosed to residents and they need to be compensated. When I purchased my property there were **NO** helicopter



flights. We lived in peace. Does this peace not "run with the land" unless otherwise changed by law??

In the last 8 years helicopters have been flying in increasing numbers. More companies have begun operating on Big Island. More helicopters have been added to existing fleets. Helicopters fly over from other islands. It is my understanding that cruise ship arrivals are expected to double soon. Here comes another helicopter. And another. I have been disturbed by helicopters in my own home, at my child's school, at the community pool and playground, where noise can be so loud that I have had to stop conversation and wait to resume after helicopters pass. Recently I was hiking in Volcano National Park on a secluded trail with no one else around, when my peace was disturbed by a helicopter. All of this noise is COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY. Honestly we cannot handle any more of this noise.

Another helicopter is flying over. I have contacted FAA, Department of Health, Department of Transport, Mayor's Office, State and County Representatives, and the tour companies themselves, numerous times. I have begged with tour operator CEO Eric Lincoln to please stop flying over my neighborhood. Yet to date the ONLY factor which seems to affect helicopter flights is the weather. NOBODY wishes to take responsibility, everybody says this is the duty of another department. Another helicopter is flying over.

This resolution urges congressional delegates to "work with community stakeholders and the local helicopter tour industry to update air tour flight paths to include a proposed off-shore route, altitudes, reporting procedures, and noise mitigation operations that can alleviate helicopter noise pollution". I would like to say that changes of altitude do very little to alleviate noise. The ONLY way to solve this noise pollution in areas where people live, work and play is to NOT FLY over areas where people live, work, and play. Given that we live on a BIG Island with a lot of wide open spaces this SHOULD NOT be a problem. Take a look at the map. There are plenty of spaces to fly where no-one would hear.

This resolution also asks to delegation to "introduce legislation addressing helicopter tour operations and noise pollution surrounding America's highly populated cities, towns, and communities; and that Hawai'i air tour operators are urged to meet with community stakeholders once a quarter to work together to address concerns related to noise complaints and safety.."

I BEG you to create strong and binding legislation regarding helicopter nuisance and noise pollution in residential areas. I also urge you to create HEAVY PENALTIES for breaking these laws and to install LOCAL OVERSIGHT on the Big Island so there is actually a third party body of governance able to ACT when helicopters fail to uphold these laws. Helicopter companies have gone unregulated for FAR TOO LONG, with slogans like "fly neighbourly" which are tantamount to a "do what you like" flight policy. These third party overseers must also be a part of ANY and all community meetings to

keep the companies on track. Unfortunately their record preceeds them and our community does not need any more of their PR gatherings.

We need action and we need it yesterday. PLEASE representatives will you step up? Will you be the body that says "yes, this is our problem and we will find a solution"?

I Implore you to supprt this resolution.

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 22, 2018, 2:14 pm

**HR-148**

Submitted on: 3/22/2018 2:13:54 PM

Testimony for TOU on 3/23/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Linda Pexa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Helicopter tours over the Puna and Hilo are destroying the peace and quiet of neighborhoods and causing a great deal of distress to local residents. We need tour companies to adopt an offshore route to avoid this ever increasing problem. The responsible government agencies need to develop and introduce policies that will regulate these tour companies.