

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
TRANSPORTATION**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2020
1:15 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 12/SENATE RESOLUTION 13
URGING THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE ACTION
REGARDING COMMERCIAL HELICOPTER TOUR OPERATIONS IN HAWAII**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 12/Senate Resolution 13 urges the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to take action regarding commercial helicopter tour operations in Hawaii. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports these measures and offers the following comments.**

The Department, through its Divisions of State Parks, and Forestry and Wildlife, manages large areas of the State which are subject to constant overflights by tour helicopters, and helicopter noise is a universal complaint of park visitors. The Department is also aware of safety issues, including the proliferation of unauthorized drone usage in areas also frequented by helicopters. The Department's operations are also frequently supported by helicopter transport of staff and equipment to remote areas. The Department believes that encouraging the FAA to increase minimum flight altitudes, mandate offshore tour aircraft routes, and create air tour management plans for parks in Hawai'i would enhance safety and provide higher quality visitor experiences.

The Department suggests amending line 27 of the first BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED on page 2 to include state parks after the national parks.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these measures.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

SR-13

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 12:00:41 AM

Testimony for TRS on 3/11/2020 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Laeha	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Helicopters fly when they want, where they want, whenever they want and as often as they want. No enforcement allows them this discretion. This legislation finally speaks to enforcement since the FAA does not enforce any of the regulations affecting helicopter tours. Clearly a lot of legislators are getting campaign contributions to continue the status quo. I'm sick of these helicopter tour operators being exempt from paying GET and doing whatever they want. We need to have better enforcement of laws and this legislation is one attempt to do this.

Other city ordinances have passed which restricted ariel advertising to preserve the natural beauty of Hawaii. Why can't we have legislation to restrict the number, frequency, time of day and day of week these helicopters are allowed to fly? Start by requiring DOT to issue permits to operate. These permits should cost significant sums of money. These permits should require reporting of flight times, frequency, number of passengers, altitudes, emergency landings, accidents etc. The permits should restrict the time of day, frequency, day of week, number of flights. Violators should be penalized.

The exemption for GET should be re-examined and these tour operators should be paying their fair share of GET (the tax on doing business in Hawaii). The tour operators pollute our skies, pose significant safety threats (killed several people already), disrupt the peace and tranquility of homes and sacred places all across the islands. The FAA does nothing. Legislators can and should restrict tour operators while on the ground.

This legislation moves in the right direction, but so much more needs to be done.

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SR-13

Submitted on: 3/11/2020 11:17:11 AM

Testimony for TRS on 3/11/2020 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bronsten Kossow	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: