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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN CALLS AGREEMENT TO CHOP TOURIST HELICOPTER FLIGHTS IN HALF 'A HUGE STEP FORWARD'

*Today's agreement will also prohibit tourist helicopter flights on
Sundays beginning April 1*

LOWER MANHATTAN - Today, Council Member Margaret Chin joined her Council colleagues in welcoming an announcement of steep reductions in the number of tourist helicopter flights, the establishment of noise and air quality monitoring, and a ban on all tourist helicopter flights on Sundays beginning April 1:

["Today's announcement"](#) - a 50 percent reduction in tourist helicopter flights and no flights on Sundays - is a huge step forward in protecting the quality of life of thousands of New Yorkers, and offers our constituents some sense of immediate relief," **said Council Members Carlos Menchaca, Helen Rosenthal, and Margaret Chin.** "As Council Members, we are proud to have pushed forward legislation that helped give our constituents a voice and a rallying point in the fight to reduce noise and air pollution caused by the increasing number of tourist helicopter flights. We want to thank the residents who have advocated relentlessly on this issue, as well as our elected partners: Congressman Jerry Nadler, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, State Senator Daniel Squadron, and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer. The requirements for the industry to monitor the number of tours, amount of noise, and air quality are critical components of our ongoing efforts to hold the industry accountable. We pledge to remain vigilant, and we will use our oversight role on the Council judiciously. We are encouraged by the helicopter industry's commitment to a steep reduction in the number of flights, and we are grateful to the Administration for listening to the concerns of residents in our recent Committee Hearing and working to find a resolution after years of inaction. This is an important recognition of the impact that noise has on the quality of life for New Yorkers and the start of a less noisy and more livable city for those in the flight path."

Council Members Menchaca, Rosenthal and Chin are co-sponsors of Intro. 858 and 859 that calls for restrictions of tourist helicopter flights taking off and landing at Downtown Manhattan Heliport.

[That legislation was given a hearing last November](#) by the Council's Committee on Environmental Protection, giving residents a long-awaited opportunity to demonstrate the negative effects that the increasing number of tourist helicopter flights have had on their quality of life.

Today's agreement was the result of months of good faith negotiations between elected officials, the New York City Economic Development Corp. and the tourist helicopter industry. Specific terms of the agreement include:

- The heliport concessionaire will prohibit all tourist flight operations from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport on Sundays beginning on April 1, 2016.
- The heliport concessionaire will reduce the total allowable number of tourist flight operations from 2015 levels by 20 percent beginning June 1, 2016; by 40 percent beginning October 1, 2016; and ultimately reaching a 50 percent reduction by the beginning of 2017. Flights in excess of these thresholds will trigger further reductions in tour flight levels.
- Starting in July 2016, the operators will provide a monthly written report to NYCEDC and the New York City Council detailing the number of tourist flight operations conducted out of the Downtown Manhattan Heliport as compared to these agreed upon levels. The report will also include information on any tour helicopter flights that fly over land and stray from agreed upon routes over water. A third party firm will be made available to verify these reports periodically.
- The heliport concessionaire has reaffirmed its commitment to prohibiting operators from flying over Governor's Island while conducting tourist flight operations. Flights over Governor's Island will subject the concessionaire to further reductions in allowable tour flight levels.
- Although tourist flight operations do not pass over Staten Island, helicopters travelling to and from their home bases outside New York City sometimes do. Effective immediately, the concessionaire will require any such flights over Staten Island to ensure maximum altitude, working in coordination with the air control towers at Newark and LaGuardia airports.
- The heliport concessionaire will establish a system to monitor air quality in the vicinity of the Downtown Manhattan Heliport and report monthly on readings to NYCEDC and the New York City Council.
- The heliport concessionaire will make best efforts to curtail idling by tour helicopters at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport during the periods between flights.
- The heliport concessionaire will actively research available technologies to further mitigate helicopter noise, reduce emissions, and promote fuel efficiency, and to implement any such technology as it becomes commercially feasible.

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