

Schumer, Bishop says FAA able to regulate copter noise

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Two [New York](#) members of Congress said Wednesday they have found a legal precedent that gives the [Federal Aviation Administration](#) the authority to regulate noisy helicopter flights over [Long Island](#).

In a meeting Wednesday with FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt, Sen. [Charles Schumer](#) and Rep. [Tim Bishop](#) (D-[Southampton](#)) said they wanted to make permanent voluntary guidelines that are meant to keep choppers above 2,500 feet.

"Our goal was to ask him to put specific regulations in effect," Schumer said. "He was very positive."

[Jim Peters](#), FAA spokesman in New York, said, "The administrator told Sen. Schumer his office would look into it further and get back to him."

The legislators want choppers to fly above 2,500 feet to protect Long Island residents from noise.

Attorneys working for Schumer, who called noise from the flights "torture" for some Long [Islanders](#), and Bishop found a 1989 case that they say gives the FAA authority to regulate helicopter flights.

Previously, the agency had told the lawmakers that it didn't have authority to regulate the flights, Schumer said.

Lawyers for Schumer and Bishop are scheduled to meet next week with FAA attorneys to discuss the proposed regulation changes.

A voluntary agreement with helicopter operators hasn't worked, Schumer said. Not all choppers that fly over Long Island toward the East End use an over-water route along the North Shore and maintain altitude of 2,500 feet to avoid populated areas, he said.

Ninety percent of the East End flights are operated by members of the Eastern Region Helicopter Council. Officials from the council didn't return a telephone call seeking comment yesterday.