

Pilots attack proposal to fly helicopters over water

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QUICK SUMMARY

Proposed regulations to send more helicopters over water instead of Long Island land came under attack Friday by a pilot group.



Photo credit: William Perlman | Senator [Charles E. Schumer](#), speaks at Nissequogue River State Park as he is joined by local officials and advocates, will announce that first-ever mandatory regulations will be issued early next week that will establish mandatory flight patterns for helicopters on Long Island. (May 21, 2010)

Proposed regulations to send more helicopters over water instead of Long Island land came under attack Friday by a pilot group, which said it is a safety issue.

"To send single-engine helicopters over water a mile or a mile-and-a-half from shore is something we have advised against because of safety," said Robert Grotell, a spokesman for the Eastern Region Helicopter Council, whose pilots account for 90 percent of the helicopter flights on Long Island.

Sen. [Charles Schumer](#) (D-N.Y.) said at a news conference Friday that he had at last gotten the FAA to move on the noise and vibration complaints along the North Shore. "Residents will finally have some peace and quiet and not have to worry about being jolted out of bed or interrupted at dinner," he said and praised Rep. [Tim Bishop](#) (D-Southampton) for his assistance.

The new proposals, which Grotell said are unprecedented in the nation, will require copters to fly over water at a minimum altitude of 2,500 feet. When they cross land, it must be over lightly populated areas. The [Federal Aviation Administration](#) regulations will be officially announced Monday. The public can comment within the next 30 days before it is law.

[Suffolk](#) Legis. Edward P. Romaine (R-[Center Moriches](#)), who sponsored a law last year on helicopter flights, called the new proposals "a better fit for the problem." Assemb. Marc Alessi (D-[Wading River](#)) called for active public comment "to ensure that the routes that are drawn do not overburden any one community."