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**THE COUNCIL  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT MEMORY, SKIES  
OVER NYC TO BE FREE OF TOURIST HELICOPTERS  
THIS SUNDAY**

**Prime sponsors of Council legislation to limit industry mark the  
beginning of steep reductions in the number of tourist helicopter flights**

CITY HALL – Council Members Carlos Menchaca, Helen Rosenthal, and Margaret Chin joined Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer in spreading the word this weekend to residents about a ban on tourist helicopter flights that will start this Sunday, and every Sunday to come. The Sunday ban, which begins on April 3, is the beginning of a series of steep reductions in the number of tourist helicopter flights that resulted from a historic agreement between the City and industry reached earlier this year.

“Constituents came forward strong on this issue, creating the pressure for this City to finally take action. I am hopeful that this Sunday ban will allow those constituents to immediately see the impact of their advocacy and, over time, witness the meaningful reduction in tourist helicopter activity,” **said Council Member Carlos Menchaca.**

"Upper West Siders who spend time in Riverside Park or live near it are fed up with incessant tourist helicopter noise every day of the week. This Sunday, for the first time in years, they'll experience relief, as they will every Sunday after that. This is just the

beginning of several improvements that will improve quality of life for New Yorkers from Inwood to Sunset Heights, including additional reductions that will begin in June. A huge thanks is in order to my colleagues who have been tireless on this issue, Council Members Carlos Menchaca and Margaret Chin," **said Council Member Helen Rosenthal.**

"For my long-suffering constituents from Battery Park City to the Financial District, relief from the noise and air pollution caused by tourist helicopters will no longer be at some hypothetical point in the future – it will be on Sunday," **said Council Member Margaret Chin.** "This Sunday ban on flights is why I joined my Council colleagues to welcome an agreement that included a steep reduction in the number of tourist helicopter flights that have negatively impacted the lives of residents for far too long. Our constituents deserve immediate relief, and this Sunday, they will get it. In the coming weeks and months, I will join my Council colleagues to ensure that the industry abides by every provision of this agreement."

"Manhattan is home to more than 1.6 million people -- so when sightseeing helicopters buzz over our streets, a handful of people are inflicting a ton of extra noise and pollution on tens or even hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers," **said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer.** "Eliminating the noise and air pollution of helicopters on Sundays is a positive development for Manhattan's residents."

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.

The agreement announced in January was the result of months of good faith negotiations between elected officials, the New York City Economic Development Corp. and the tourist helicopter industry. In addition to the Sunday ban on flights that will begin this weekend, specific terms of the agreement include:

- 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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