

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20002-4290

RECOMMENDATION ON COMMUNITY INPUT SYSTEM FOR HELICOPTER NOISE

WHEREAS, helicopter use by public and private operators in the National Capital Region is vital for public safety and health, law enforcement, and national security, and;

WHEREAS, COG issued a "Regional Helicopter System Plan" report in 2005 that documented the region's use of helicopters and identified a range of issues and concerns regarding community noise impacts; and

WHEREAS, even though there are strict rules governing flight paths for helicopters, certain communities are adversely affected by helicopter noise; and

WHEREAS, on September 8, 2010, the COG Board adopted Resolution R51-10 which identified enhancements to COG's aviation policy program for FY 2011 and beyond, and included establishment of an Aviation Policy Liaison, as well as a commitment to convene a community forum on helicopter noise; and

WHEREAS, COG hosted the "Helicopter Noise Forum" on Sept. 22, 2010, in Arlington, Virginia; the forum included presentations from officials from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Military District of Washington, as well as participation by local elected officials and citizens; and

WHEREAS, elected official and citizen participants at the September forum expressed an interest in identifying improved means for community input regarding helicopter noise; and

WHEREAS, a special follow-up briefing by the FAA on helicopter use for elected officials from affected communities was held at COG on Nov. 30, 2010, and the possibility of a community input system regarding helicopter noise was discussed, as well as a range of issues and concerns associated with such a system; and

WHEREAS, a second Helicopter Noise Forum for elected officials and citizens is being planned for February, 2011.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

COG asks its Aviation Policy Liaison to work with local elected officials, citizens, and officials from the FAA, the Military District of Washington, and other agencies to:

1. Help improve community understanding of the nature of the region's helicopter system, and associated rules governing helicopter flights;
2. In conjunction with the FAA and regional elected officials, actively pursue solutions that 1) aggregate community input concerning helicopter noise concerns and 2) allow periodic examination and trouble shooting to address "hot spots"; and
3. Report back to the Board in the spring of 2011, regarding the outcome of the February, 2011 forum, as well as findings and recommendations regarding approaches for enhanced community input on helicopter noise developed in cooperation with the FAA.