NYC HELITOUR OPERATORS FORCED TO ACCEPT 50% FLIGHT CUT

News / Business aviation



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's (D) office announced a deal earlier this week that would force the city's five existing helitour operators using the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, located near Wall Street on the East River, to curtail flights by 50 percent by Jan. 1, 2017.

Reductions will begin in April, with an elimination of all Sunday flights followed by further cuts of 20 percent each in June and October (the bookends of the busy summer/fall tourist season) from the baseline of these same months in 2015. The remaining 10 percent cut will come in January next year.

The operators had been facing a total ban from the New York City Council, and de Blasio's compromise was seen as a way of keeping the New York City helicopter air tour industry viable in the face of growing community opposition to anecdotal helicopter noise complaints. Operators offering helitours from the Manhattan heliport include Liberty Helicopters, Helicopter Flight Services, Manhattan Helicopter, New York Helicopter Charter and Zip Aviation.

“It was just basically an ultimatum provided to the air tour operators,” Helicopter Association International president Matt Zuccaro told AIN. “The mayor runs the city of New York, and he decided, 'This is it. This is basically what I am offering you and I expect you to comply.'”

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SOURCE: AIN

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