

IT Committee

From: Cynthia C Harbert <cavah@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 1:07 PM
To: IT Committee; Yukilei Sugimura; County Clerk
Subject: Infrastructure and Transportation Committee re:Protecting Haleakala from commercial helicopter and bicycle tours

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Aloha kakou

Please accept this as testimony in support of limiting commercial helicopter flights or tours of Haleakala, as well as commercial bicycle tours of the upcountry slopes of Haleakala.

It has been my understanding that helicopters were not allowed within the park, or the airspace that would be measured as being of Haleakala. I was misinformed.

The need to immediately enact protections of the mauna is clear. Economically driven interests have eroded much of the inherent nature of Maui, as of all of Hawai'i Nei, over the past century, with an escalation beginning in the post World War II years. Knowing this, we are already late to the plea for aloha 'āina. As residents who hold kuleana to care for our home, the issue of helicopters threatening the peace, health and beauty of Haleakala is an urgent one.

The owner of Blue Hawaiian Helicopters claimed on HawaiiNewsNow on Tuesday, March 15, that if his company was not allowed to fly over the crater for tours, they would have to "go into residential". Isn't that already the case to some degree? I am an upcountry resident and the slopes of Haleakala. I have also been at Waihe'e and witnessed the constant passage of helicopters coming from West Maui. No wonder our native birds are threatened! The mechanical birds of commercial enterprises have invaded, and are as invasively dangerous as any other species that imperils the singular and precious place we call home.

Helicopters presently fly all over residential areas on our island, primarily going to or from places that used to be pristine, for commercial interests. With true care for Maui, Blue Hawaiian Helicopters might creatively investigate ways to use their fleet for benefit of the island. There's an infinite spectrum of need across Maui Nui for infrastructure enhancement-transport, healthcare, conservation,cargo-jobs could still be created, owners could still fill their economic appetites. The existence of this aviation concern, and like others, are for profits that are on an inequitable with the population of Maui Nui. There are other ways to enhance our land, water and air while financially thriving which are not so obscenely abhorrent as helicopters carrying visitors over sacred spaces.

Have we not done enough damage?

Do we have the courage to consider the lives of the most innocent-nēnē, 'ua'u, all the honeycreepers, pueo- who have no concept of, or defense against, a terrifying mechanical bird encircling their nests.

Each of us must consider ways, big and small, to care for our world beyond short sighted profit margins that have devastating impact on fragile living organisms, everywhere. The list is long, from land, sea and air, the rare creatures that remain on Maui must be protected against the onslaught of over-tourism. Most citizens are busy working to the degree they are unaware or unable to involvement themselves in the tedious work it takes to confront commercial interests on Maui.

Bicycle tours by operations such as Haleakala Bike Company have likewise put upcountry communities and residents in danger, as well the lives of those that purchase their tours. Putting noise riders on narrow, bumpy roads with the volume of traffic on Kokomo, Makawao, Baldwin avenues is impossible to sensibly understand. These operations are putting everyone in danger. We have all seen quaking children trying to steer at close to 20 mph(?)weaving into traffic, cars having to divert into oncoming traffic, inexperienced bicyclists blocking traffic. I can not comprehend how this activity was ever sanctioned. I remember the days of Crusier Bob's when visitors risked their lives going down from the summit. People have died here engaged in this activity. Sure looks fun, but this is not the place for it.

Why does this continue?

Please consider Haleakala to be a no fly zone, except for emergencies or flights to provide for the health of the mauna, and not to extract further or damage our peace, culture and 'aloha 'āina.

Please consider the immediate cessation or severe limitation of commercial bicycle tours through and of Haleakala National Park, Makawao, Haiku, Pukalani, and Pa'ia; on the body of Haleakala.

From the Haleakala National Park site:

'Au i ke kai me he manu ala.

Mahalo.

Me ke aloha pumehana

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