

East Hampton Turns to Congress Over Airport Noise

Town will seek federal legislation that would allow it to pass restrictions



A private jet arrives at East Hampton Airport. PHOTO: HEATHER WALSH FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By

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East Hampton lost its legal fight to exert more control over the town's municipal airport to reduce aircraft noise. Now it wants Congress to help out.

Larry Cantwell, the town supervisor of this community of 21,500 residents on the eastern end of Long Island, said East Hampton will seek federal legislation that would allow the town to pass restrictions to address the rising number of aircraft-related noise complaints.

More than 26,000 noise complaints were registered in 2016, up 8% from the previous year, according to the town.

The town will also ask the Federal Aviation Administration for permission to set restrictions on the municipal airport, which has about 25,000 takeoffs and landings a year. Most of which happen during the busy summer months when people flock to the Hamptons and the town's population quadruples.

“The airport is an asset of the town of East Hampton,” Mr. Cantwell said. “There ought to be some tools available to the community, that are reasonable, to run their own airport.”

U.S. Rep. Lee Zeldin, a Republican who represents East Hampton, supports the town's efforts to gain local control of the airport. “Congressman Zeldin will continue working closely with East Hampton Town regarding options moving forward at this point,” a spokeswoman for Mr. Zeldin said.

The town is now seeking help from Congress and the FAA after failing on Monday to get the U.S. Supreme Court to consider the town's appeal in a case where the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that restrictions enacted by East Hampton in 2015 to address airport noise violated federal-aviation law.

The town had set morning and evening curfews on flights and limited the number of trips certain aircraft can make to reduce noise at the airport, but air-charter operators later sued the town in federal court.

In court filings to the Supreme Court, the attorneys for the aviation companies said the town's dispute should be “properly addressed to Congress, not the Court.”

A lawyer for the aviation companies didn't return a request for comment.

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Corrections & Amplifications

A photo with an earlier version of this article showed a propeller plane, but the caption incorrectly said it was a jet. The photo has been replaced. 6/28.

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