

Resolution 01-16

WHEREAS, Jackson Hole is famous for encompassing some of the most pristine and natural countryside in the world; and

WHEREAS, helicopter service is vital to the region for point-to-point travel, for helicopter skiing, for professional moving making, for firefighting, for maintaining communication towers, for reaching areas difficult to access and for emergency medical services; and

WHEREAS, more than four million travelers from around the world come to Jackson Hole to enjoy the peace and natural setting here, such that the local economy depends upon their visits; and

WHEREAS, Jackson and Teton County offer incomparable attractions including portions of Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Teton Wilderness Area, Jedediah Smith Wilderness Area, Vinegar Hole Wilderness Area, Gros Ventre Wilderness Area, National Elk Refuge, Bridger-Teton National Forest, and Targhee National Forest; and

WHEREAS, these wild and natural areas are home to many species of wildlife, including bald eagle, grizzly bear, lynx, bison, gray wolf, and big horn mountain sheep, as well as Canadian geese, trumpeter swan, elk, pronghorn antelope, deer, and moose; and

WHEREAS, helicopter scenic tours have been scheduled to begin in Jackson Hole this summer; and

WHEREAS, helicopters may disturb the peace and quiet of noise-sensitive areas; and

WHEREAS, helicopter overflights may disturb and distress wildlife; and

WHEREAS, scenic helicopter flights may pose an increased safety risk with resulting negative impacts on the financial and other resources of local law enforcement agencies, fire fighters, and emergency medical service providers; and

WHEREAS, in Jackson Hole exists the unique situation of the commercial airport being located inside the boundaries of a national park (Grand Teton National Park); and

WHEREAS, the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, the National Resources Defense Council, the Wilderness Watch, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and the Flat Creek Ranch have joined in filing a petition to the FAA seeking a temporary ban on helicopter scenic tours in Teton County until a full study can be performed to determine operation specifications that will ensure the safety and welfare of the human population of Teton County and fully address the environmental issues raised by these flights; and

WHEREAS, Senator Craig Thomas has supported this petition by sending the FAA administrator a strong letter stating that “the safety and environmental issues discussed at length in the emergency petition present a strong argument to expedite your agency’s study of helicopter tours in Teton County”; and

WHEREAS, Senator Michael Enzi has supported this petition by sending the FAA administrator a strong letter stating he believes “the petition contains a number of compelling safety reasons why such flights should be further studied by the FAA before the Congress deliberates on the possibility of implementing a permanent ban on scenic helicopter tours”; and

WHEREAS, Governor Jim Geringer has supported the petition in a letter to the petitioners, calling it “the best opportunity and means to administratively address the quality of life and technical environmental concerns outlined [in the petition]”;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Jackson Town Council urges the Federal Aviation Agency to act favorably on the petition requesting a temporary ban on helicopter scenic tours pending a full FAA study of the economic, safety, and environmental impacts of such tours; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jackson Town Council expresses thanks to U. S. Senator Craig Thomas, U. S. Senator Michael Enzi, and Governor Jim Geringer for their strong support and work on behalf of the concerns of the citizens of Teton County and the Town of Jackson, Wyoming.

DATED this 2nd DAY of JULY, 2001.

The vote showed all in favor. Motion carried.