



**HAINES BOROUGH, ALASKA**  
**P.O. BOX 1209 • HAINES, ALASKA 99827**  
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Police Dept. 907.766.2121 • (fax) 907.766.2128  
Fire Dept. 907.766.2155 • (fax) 907.766.3373

March 10, 2015

Jessica Plachta  
HC 60 Box 2621  
Haines, AK 99827

Subject: Helicopter Complaint – February 24, 2015

Dear Ms. Plachta:

I initiated an investigation into the complaint the Haines Borough received from you on February 25, 2015 pertaining to helicopter activity on February 24, 2015.

SEABA began commercial heliskiing activity on February 26, Alaska Heliskiing's first day was February 28, and Alaska Mountain Guides has not yet begun operation. As such, the helicopter activity you observed was prior to the start of commercial heliskiing operations, and it is those operations that the voluntary *Agreement Regarding Flight Operations and Practices of Commercial Ski Tours* applies to. In other words, the agreements do not take effect until the first day of actual commercial skiing activity for each permittee.

The helicopter you observed on February 24 was arriving on site for SEABA to take contractual possession for the start of their commercial activities. I understand you were concerned about elevation and flight paths. Under federal law, the borough has no authority to regulate air activity occurring outside of the voluntary agreements.

Therefore, I have determined the agreements were not violated on February 24, 2015 and no enforcement is warranted.

Sincerely,

David Sosa  
Borough Manager

## Helicopter Complaint

Jessica Plachta  
jessica.meadow@gmail.com  
HC 60 Box 2621  
Haines, AK 99827  
(907) 767-5768

Dear Haines Borough,

On February 24, 2015, at about 5pm, a helicopter was traveling at less than 500 feet elevation, heading southeast from the direction of SEABA/BSV's property, directly over the Little Salmon River. The helicopter maintained a low (under 500 feet) elevation for over a mile while traveling along the river. My son and I heard the helicopter from inside our home, went out on the porch, saw the helicopter above the treetops, and watched it fly over the Little Salmon Pond. My husband was out skiing along the Little Salmon River, and saw the helicopter fly directly over himself and the river maintaining a very low elevation. There was no wind, no fog, and a very high, light ceiling of clouds, offering very good visibility.

If that was a commercial heliskiing helicopter, the flight elevation was a violation of their Commercial Tour Permit, because it violates the MOA with the Borough. Helicopters are required to gain elevation as rapidly as possible after liftoff, and maintain a minimum elevation of 1500 feet over the valley floor at all times. The Little Salmon River is part of the Bald Eagle Preserve, and if flying along the Little Salmon is part of their flight path, it really shouldn't be. Looking at the Borough website, I don't actually see any flight path maps, or any updated information regarding the use of the temporary heliport off Chilkat Lake Road. Maybe you can point me to that information.

The Heliski Complaint Form would be more user-friendly if it were editable online, rather than having to print, fill out, and scan in the form to send to the Borough. I expect that if I provide the same information on this email, Borough staff will have the necessary information to act on my complaint. If this is somehow not possible, please let me know.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jessica Plachta