Professional Helicopter Pilots Association (PHPA) Statement
Re: FAA’s Significant Progress Report to Congress on the Los
Angeles Helicopter Noise Initiative

Los Angeles, CA, May 20, 2015: On April 21, 2015, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released a
document stating that significant progress has been made on six action items stemming from a May
30th, 2013 study done by the FAA on noise matters in Los Angeles County. The statement of,
“significant progress” followed a request for progress to be made as referred to in the January, 2014
Congressional Appropriations Act.

Despite published statements to the contrary from some of the stakeholder groups who maintain no
significant progress has been made, the PHPA stands firmly behind the FAA and agrees this multi-
party collaborative group of industry and homeowners representatives have made significant progress.
All of us agree there is much more work to be done and the process is ongoing. However, hundreds of
hours have been dedicated to collaborating with the other stakeholders to work toward appropriate
solutions to the helicopter noise concerns in the Los Angeles basin.

The PHPA has been at the forefront of negotiations with the residential groups and with the FAA. We
participate in many of the stakeholder group committees and remain committed to ongoing positive and
substantive communication with all stakeholders.

The PHPA is concerned that the Los Angeles Area Helicopter Noise Coalition (LAAHNC) may not
accurately represent the full contingent of homeowner associations, much less the full population of
over 10,000,000 people in Los Angeles County.

The PHPA has reached out to helicopter operators, both public and private, and has drafted several
versions of voluntary agreements which have been signed by the upper management of these
operators. Those voluntary agreements represent the helicopter industry’s commitment to mitigating
noise, while at the same time keeping helicopter traffic safely away from fixed-wing (airplane) traffic in
the Los Angeles area and operating with maximum safety to all parties. The Los Angeles area
represents the most complex airspace in the nation. Simply mandating that all helicopters increase
their altitude to the height where the much faster flying fixed-wing traffic exists is not a solution. That
would only lead to mid-air collisions or massive changes in air traffic throughout the County in order to
avoid such mid-airs and a resultant decrease in safety for the public as well as an increase in the cost
of all forms of aviation in the greater Los Angeles area.
Virtually all of the versions of the voluntary measures put forward by the PHPA, which included specific increases in altitude of certain helicopter traffic, as well as route adjustments, have been summarily dismissed by the LAAHNC.

The coalition has said the voluntary measures the helicopter industry has put forward are not good enough. Members of the LAAHNC have ridden along with helicopter pilots and have been shown the reasons why helicopters operate at the altitudes they fly, the physics of rotary-wing flight, and the airspace ripple effect issues.

No amount of education or statistical proof has changed their “official” published stance that the helicopter community has been less than cooperative. Many members of the LAAHNC, however, have told us privately they appreciate the efforts the PHPA has made, recognize that helicopters have a job to do, and only wish the spokespersons for their organization would concede that progress is moving forward.

Instead, the LAAHNC is demanding the FAA change all the fixed-wing routing, including the routing for aircraft on instrument flight plans (i.e.: commercial airliners), so helicopter traffic can fill the void where fixed-wing traffic would have operated prior to a routing change. This approach lacks reason, and lacks support throughout the aviation industry (beyond rotary-wing aircraft owners and operators). It would likely lead to major disruption, substantial costs to the airlines and other operators, as well as inconvenience to the public.

The re-routing of all air traffic in the Los Angeles area would be a herculean task and would require years of study by the FAA. It would likely have a huge impact on safety of flight and additional cost to the traveling public. The PHPA has acted in good faith and will continue to collaborate. We only hope the other stakeholder groups will come back to the table so we may resume discussion.

For further information, contact the PHPA at www.PHPA.org.

PHPA Board of Directors