

A VOTER'S GUIDE TO THE MYTHS, HALF-TRUTHS, OUTRIGHT LIES, AND THE FACTS ABOUT THE EAST HAMPTON AIRPORT.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWO DECADES, THE TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON HAS THE POWER TO TAKE BACK CONTROL OF THE 610 ACRES IT HANDED OVER TO THE EAST HAMPTON AIRPORT WITH EMBARRASSINGLY LITTLE RETURN TO SHOW FOR IT. DON'T BE FOOLED BY INCORRECT INFORMATION OR FRIGHTENED BY FEAR-MONGERING. CONSIDER INSTEAD THE MANY EXCITING ALTERNATIVE USES THAT 610 ACRES COULD BE PUT TO, PROJECTS THAT WOULD BENEFIT THE WHOLE OF THE COMMUNITY.

THERE'S A DENSE FOG OF CONFUSION SURROUNDING THE EAST HAMPTON AIRPORT largely created by the ambitiously named, East Hampton Community Alliance which, in reality, is a business alliance founded by two pilots, catering to the interests of companies that profit by transporting a tiny group of people to the Hamptons on various sized jets, seaplanes, propeller planes, and helicopters. Over the past several months the "alliance" has peppered voters with the results of a "study" contracted by a hired lobbyist. Its misleading assumptions suit the selfish interests of the 1% while victimizing the other 99%. That shouldn't shock anyone.

But what is shocking are the facts – the plain, simple, undistorted, verifiable, documented facts, the majority of which are shown in the Town's own independently conducted study, initiated to help them determine the truth and arrive at the best answers for all of East Hampton's voters.

FALSE:
If the airport were shut down East Hampton's economy would likely collapse.

FACT:
Keeping it simple: According to the unbiased, independent Economic Impact Analysis commissioned by The Town itself, estimated passenger spending amounts to 1%-3% of the Town's taxable sales revenue. An amount, they say, that's "less than the price of a medium-sized home in East Hampton." Furthermore, again according to the Town's own study, of the 1.7 million people who visit East Hampton each year, less than 1% used the airport to get here. Enough said? Still worse, The Town of East Hampton receives, zero, nothing, zilch from any airport revenue, which can only be used to benefit the airport!

FALSE:
The only people plagued by the Apocalypse Now level of noise from the East Hampton Airport are those who live close to the airport – and people who live outside the Town of East Hampton.

FACT:
The fact is that complaints flood in from East Hampton residents as well as neighbors as far away as Riverhead, the North Fork, Southampton, and Shelter Island. In 2019, the last non-pandemic year, during the three-month season (June 27th-September 30th) 46,730 complaints were filed!

FALSE:
Closing the airport would threaten your safety. Medevac would be unable to land here to rescue people.

FACT:
The truth of the matter is very different. When pressed to downsize the planned Emergency Center on Pantigo Road, the attorney for the Stonybrook/ South Hampton Hospital was quoted in The East Hampton Star as saying that they were easily able to eliminate the planned helipad "...because emergency helicopters are allowed to land in any safe open space." Any firm, flat place like a highway, a ball field, a parking lot, in short, anywhere they're needed, close to the scene of the emergency.

FALSE:
The East Hampton Airport accounts for only a tiny fraction of air pollution and is in perfect accord with The Town of East Hampton's solemn pledge to be a Climate Smart Community.

FACT:
A harmfully misleading claim that defies not only logic but all available facts. During takeoffs and landings, airplane emissions contain a variety of noxious air pollutants including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, during one hour of flight, a typical private jet emits more carbon into the air that you breathe than a typical car does in one year. Ugly fact: Aircraft using the East Hampton Airport spew out approximately 51.5 million pounds of carbon emissions each year! The Environmental Conditions Analysis commissioned by the Town concluded that 6% of the Town's harmful emissions are produced by the 1% of the population – which just happens to be the 1% that insist that the airport be maintained for their convenience. We can't eliminate cars, but we can certainly eliminate aircraft.

FALSE:
The airport is perfectly safe and poses no danger to the neighborhoods that surround it.

FACT:
To begin with – given that most aircraft accidents happen within a few miles of an airport, on approach or departure – a land-locked airport is a very bad idea. Last year, the Town, wisely recognizing the danger of aircraft flying scarcely above the treeline, banned the Special VFR (Visual Flight Rule) provision which allows pilots – including those not qualified to use instruments – to land, flying dangerously low, using eyesight rather than instruments to guide them safely in. A commercial air transportation company took the Town to court, and a judge, citing generic FAA allowances rather than considering the very particular and unwise geographic issues of the East Hampton Airport, issued a temporary order that supported the provision's reinstatement. And that, sadly, is where things stand – for now. How safe do you think that is!

FALSE:
The airport will in no way endanger your water supply.

FACT:
Without getting too technical, it already has. The Magothy Aquifer is the Town of East Hampton's sole source of drinkable water. Needless to say, maintaining its purity is essential. The East Hampton Airport sits directly atop the deepest and most critical part of the Aquifer. You hardly need a scientist to tell you that pumping a million gallons of fuel annually, thousands of landings and takeoffs, and the inexcusably unwise practice of testing firefighting foam on airport grounds is not a healthy idea. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has detected four different locations on airport property that show evidence of contamination. It is likely that this contamination is responsible for the poisoning of wells in Wainscott. A further investigation is in process at this moment. Remedial action is liable to cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. Ah, but of course somebody is profiting from pumping all that fuel: primarily it's the one single operator, Sound Aircraft Services.

FALSE:
If the East Hampton Airport were shut down, thousands of jobs would be lost.

FACT:
Again, according to The Town's Economic Impact Analysis, the airport employs an estimated 15 people full-time and brings in no more than 100 - 230 tourist-related jobs. To be charitable, the "Alliance's" oft-used claim that passenger spending generates "thousands of jobs" is simply a self-serving fantasy.

FALSE:
If the airport were shut down it would be replaced with dozens of big box stores.

FACT:
That is among the more absurd threats. The facts are simple and undeniable. As the Town's 2021 environmental study clearly states, it is absolutely essential that the aquifer – the entire Town of East Hampton's only source of drinking water – be rigorously protected. Therefore, Big Box stores and a further explosion of McMansions would never be allowed to happen because they do not conform to the Town's unambiguous decree. It's worth pointing out that the airport doesn't either.

FALSE:
If the East Hampton Airport were closed the vast majority of its flights would end up landing in Montauk.

FACT:
The tiny airport in Montauk, with its short runways and iffy weather, has, by formal FAA agreement, been designated a Prior-Permission Airport. A very powerful category. This simply means that before jets and helicopters – the worst offenders of all – can land there they must radio ahead for permission. This means that the Montauk Airport has the absolute unqualified power to say no. Simple.

FALSE:
The number of various kinds of aircraft flying into East Hampton has decreased over the past two years.

FACT:
This flies in the face of the airport's own recorded facts. The truth is that they have geometrically increased – from 4,296 flights during the first five months of 2020 to 7,592 flights during just the first five months of 2021. And that was before the season's onslaught began!

FALSE:
We can rely on the latest in a string of "Pilot Pledges" to solve all the above problems.

FACT:
The latest "Pilot Pledge" is yet another cruel piece of cynicism that apparently assumes East Hampton voters are totally uninformed and hopelessly gullible. The "Pledge" is entirely voluntary, there is no penalty for non-compliance. What's more, the supposed pledgers are unnamed and unlisted. After their so-called pledge was proudly displayed on the "Community Alliance" website, aircraft flying below 400, 300, and even as low as 200 feet, continues defiantly unabated, the pledge ignored. If you want to know how effective the Pilot Pledge has been, all you have to do is believe your own ears.

CLICKABLES

I'd like to receive email updates:
info@thefacthounds.com

I'd like to know more:
saynotokhto.com
transformeasthamptonairport.com

I'd like to help the Town Board muster the courage to do the right thing:

reenvisionhto@ehamptonny.gov
pvanscoyoc@ehamptonny.gov
dlys@ehamptonny.gov
jbragman@ehamptonny.gov
kburke-gonzalez@ehamptonny.gov
soverby@ehamptonny.gov



THEFACTHOUNDS

["Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts." Daniel Patrick Moynihan]