

As a commercial pilot and previously Grand Canyon Air Tour pilot, I can say with certainty that more altitude means more options if something goes wrong. I cannot fathom why pilots, especially helicopter pilots would find that a lower altitude affords more options. It does not matter whether the area is congested or not.

The other point in favor of maintaining the status of SFAR 71 lies in the environmental impact imposed by so many air tours. While I recognize that air tours are one of the most environmentally friendly methods of sharing our love and respect for mother Earth, the impact of low altitude flights on ecosystems is detrimental to the integrity of the environment.

If we allow a stream of low flying aircraft, we will undermine the essence of what we are trying to share with visitors: the pristine beauty of a place. We may also compromise the safety of those visitors and of the local population. If pilots find that 1500' minimum is causing an increase in potential for mid air collisions, then may be a system of common frequency and reports over landmarks(as is done over the Grand Canyon) needs to be instituted.  
Thank you for your time.