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Aviation Safety / Eastern Region

Date: December 29, 2023

Subject: ERA24LA076 Record of Conversation

Contact: Russell Henderson, pilot

The following is a record of conversation with Mr. Russell Henderson. Mr. Henderson was interviewed by phone on December 29, 2023. He was called at [REDACTED] and provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview, he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

At this stage of the conversation, he was advised that for transparency I would be typing the notes and would send to him for review and comment.

Mr. Henderson stated that the flight departed from the heliport at Eagles Landing Heliport (03TN), Sevierville, Tennessee, at 1300 EST for a CFR Part 91 sightseeing tour flight. About 35-40 minutes into the flight, he observed an engine chip light annunciation on his instrument panel. He immediately began maneuvering toward a landing area, and within a few seconds, he started to hear an abnormal noise from the engine. He confirmed that his oil temperature and pressure were indicating zero, so he immediately entered an autorotation, continuing to maneuver to the spot he had selected. About 3-5 seconds after entering the autorotation the engine stopped producing power. He continued to autorotate to the field, and on impact the helicopter skidded forward several feet and came to a stop. During this time, the main rotor blades contacted one of the vertical stabilizers on the tailboom causing substantial damage to the tailboom.

Once the helicopter came to a stop, he got all 5 passengers (one who was a pilot but not seated at the controls) out and away from the helicopter. All declined medical care. He stated that the helicopter was still in the field and that company mechanics and the FAA were meeting at the site.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 6, 2024. He replied on January 8, 2024, at 0916 EST with the comment, "Confirming accuracy and no changes to this record of conversation." One typo was also corrected and the final digest was e-mailed to him on January 10, 2024.