

# THE VTOL ADVOCATE

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### Public Comment Sought on Draft ATMPs for 4 US National Parks

The US National Park Service (NPS) and the FAA are seeking public feedback on draft air tour management plans (ATMPs) and associated environmental assessments (EAs) proposed for four parks in two states: Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and Haleakalā National Park in Hawaii and Badlands National Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota. The NPS is accepting public feedback through the [NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment \(PEPC\) website](#) starting May 16, 2023, and ending Jun. 16, 2023. Written comments can also be sent to the mailing addresses provided on the NPS PEPC project websites.

The agencies will hold public meetings to review each park's draft ATMP and answer questions. Meeting information appears below:

#### **Badlands National Park ATMP**

Wednesday, May 24, 2023, 6:00 pm–7:30 pm mountain (UTC -6)  
Join the meeting: <https://faavideo.zoomgov.com/j/1600068134>  
Passcode: 246810

#### **Haleakalā National Park ATMP**

Thursday, May 25, 2023, 6:00 pm–7:30 pm Hawaiian (UTC -10)  
Join the meeting: <https://faavideo.zoomgov.com/j/1614722433>  
Passcode: 246810

#### **Mount Rushmore National Memorial ATMP**

Thursday, Jun. 1, 2023, 6:00 pm–7:30 pm mountain (UTC -6)  
Join the meeting: <https://faavideo.zoomgov.com/j/1615600109>  
Passcode: 246810

#### **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park ATMP**

Wednesday, Jun. 7, 2023, 6:00 pm–7:30 pm Hawaiian (UTC -10)  
Join the meeting: <https://faavideo.zoomgov.com/j/1615197156>  
Passcode: 246810

HAI is setting up a call-to-action campaign for the industry to submit comments. We need your help in developing the local perspective for our comments. Please email [cade.clark@rotor.org](mailto:cade.clark@rotor.org) to tell us about any problems the defined routes will cause and any other local issues these draft plans will create.

Comments are due by Jun. 16 for all parks. For more detailed information, [visit the PEPC website](#).

## Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Issues RFI on UAS/AAM Airspace Management

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) [Department of Advanced Technology Initiatives](#) (ATI) has issued a request for information (RFI) to identify academic and industry groups actively engaged in researching and developing airspace management tools and systems for uncrewed aircraft systems (UASs) and advanced air mobility (AAM). The specific areas of interest include UAS traffic management (UTM), improved weather observation/prediction tools, sensor networks, and ground-based radar systems that support future airspace management at low altitudes.

As part of its current plans, CNO ATI is developing an advanced regional mobility corridor (ARMC) to connect the northern boundary of the Choctaw Nation reservation with the north Texas ecosystem.

CNO ATI seeks information from companies, academic research entities, and nonprofit groups currently involved in airspace management technology R&D. The format for RFI responses is limited to 10 pages and should not include any cost proposals.

For a copy of the RFI, please email [katia.veraza@rotor.org](mailto:katia.veraza@rotor.org). **RFI responses in PDF format are due by 5:00 pm central (UTC -5) on May 31, 2023.**

## HAI and Coalition Urge Congressional Support for Sustainable Aviation Fuels

Last week, HAI along with 38 other general aviation industry leaders, sent a letter to the US Congress urging legislators to prioritize funding for key federal programs focused on accelerating the development and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) in the United States. HAI believes this action is vital to driving our commitment to a greener future.

Aviation stands out as one of the most challenging sectors to decarbonize, and SAF presents a promising solution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our industry. To fully realize the potential of SAF, continued federal investment in research, development, and demonstration is essential to enable us to discover cleaner methods of producing these fuels and establish a thriving SAF market.

The coalition letter specifically highlights the need for robust funding in the Department of Energy's Bioenergy Technologies Office (BETO) and the FAA's NextGen Environmental Research programs. These programs have demonstrated their significance in driving advancements in sustainable aviation fuels and related technologies. By supporting them financially, we can lower costs, unlock new pathways for fuel production, and create job opportunities, particularly in rural communities across the nation.

As Congress embarks on crafting the fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills, our association appeals for the prioritization of funding for these programs. Such investments will not only drive innovation and job creation, but also position the United States as a global leader in the emerging sustainable aviation fuel industry. By supporting these initiatives, we can shape a more sustainable future for the aviation sector, significantly contributing to our broader environmental goals.

If interested, [read the coalition letter](#).

## Congress to Vote on FAA Legislation in July

According to Senate Commerce Chair Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), it is unlikely that the FAA reauthorization markup will take place until June. Cantwell has expressed her expectation that both the Senate and the House will pass their respective FAA bills and subsequently engage in a conference to reconcile any differences during the summer. The goal is to enact a final bill by the Sep. 30 deadline. Senate Aviation Subcommittee Chair Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) recently mentioned that ongoing discussions surrounding the debt limit are affecting short-term progress on the bill. However, she remains optimistic about meeting the reauthorization expiration date by the end of summer.

In addition, the House is expecting to vote to reauthorize the FAA in early July. Rep. Sam Graves (R-06-Mo.), chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, stated during an infrastructure event at the [Business Roundtable](#) that the bill will undergo committee markup in June before being brought to the floor for a vote. Reaching a consensus on the five-year extension necessitates addressing various contentious issues, including workforce matters, government funding, and consumer protections.

Graves expressed confidence in the likelihood of a conference with the Senate to finalize the bill, assuring that the FAA will be reauthorized promptly and in a timely manner.

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### Helicopter Association International

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