



Issue Overview, Apr. 15, 2024

State and Local Updates

[VAI Testifies against S.B.1193, an Act Banning Leaded Aviation Fuels](#)

[Hawaii S.B.2747 Passes House, Heads to Conference](#)

International Update

[Report Finds EU Failing to Support Sustainable Biofuels in Transportation](#)

Regional Representative Update

[By Josh Rousseau, VAI Northeastern US Regional Representative](#)

State and Local Updates

VAI Testifies against S.B.1193, an Act Banning Leaded Aviation Fuels



Chuck Street, VAI Western US Regional Representative, testified before the California State Senate opposing S.B.1193.

Summary of Facts

Last week, VAI testified in Sacramento before the California State Senate's Transportation Committee to oppose [Senate Bill 1193 \(S.B.1193\)](#). The legislation seeks to prohibit the use, sale, or distribution of leaded aviation gas (avgas) by airport operators and aviation retail establishments according to a specified timeline inconsistent with the FAA's 2030 timeline. State Sen. Caroline Menjivar (D-District 20) introduced the bill in February, with the purpose of reducing public health and environmental risks associated with leaded avgas use at California airports.

Before the April hearing, the implementation timeline would have required the ban of leaded avgas in 60% of California's airports by January 2026. After VAI held extensive discussions with Transportation Committee members and provided testimony during the hearing, the committee amended the bill to exempt those airport operators and aviation

retail establishments that a county's board of supervisors determines have no access to commercially available unleaded aviation replacement fuel. Airport operators and aviation retail establishments would be permitted to submit written requests to their county board of supervisors for such determinations. The bill was also amended to exempt airports operating under federal grant assurances until the grant assurance expires.

VAI Position and Actions

VAI supports the transition to unleaded fuels and will continue to advocate for a safe and responsible approach. Adhering to the FAA's 2030 timeline will ensure that sufficient infrastructure and supply chains are in place to facilitate a safe and efficient transition. We thank the committee for hearing our concerns and amending the bill accordingly.

Hawaii S.B.2747 Passes House, Heads to Conference

Summary of Facts

Hawaii State [Senate Bill 2747](#) (S.B.2747), requiring air tour operators to maintain aircraft liability insurance coverage of \$20 million per person per incident (as amended), passed the House after its third reading on the floor and now heads to a conference committee for further discussion.

State Sen. Chris Lee (D-District 25) introduced the bill in January with a liability coverage requirement of at least \$1 million per person per incident. The Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts removed the \$1 million threshold and advanced the bill, indicating that the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection would review the language and assign a rate, given its expertise in handling insurance limits.

Earlier this month, the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce amended S.B.2747, increasing the liability insurance requirement for air tour operators to \$20 million per person per incident. Notably, the committee conducted no studies or assessments before imposing this limit, relying instead on the recommendation of a single person's testimony.

VAI Position and Actions

VAI, alongside the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, the National Business Aviation Association, and the National Air Transportation Association, submitted a coalition letter to both the Hawaii Senate and the Hawaii House opposing this bill.

Most worrisome to VAI is the bill's requirement of an insurance rate that is not readily available at a reasonable cost to operators. In addition, the imposition of specific requirements solely for air tour operators could risk violating FAA grant assurances, which could jeopardize Hawaii's annual federal funding of approximately \$100 million allocated for airport improvement.

Moreover, S.B.2747 may face federal preemption due to its overlap with FAA jurisdiction because of its apparent intent to regulate aircraft safety, an area exclusively under FAA authority. The FAA establishes insurance requirements for operators; states lack the regulatory discretion to impose additional standards.

Considering the significant federal funding at stake and potential implications for aviation safety regulation, the Hawaii legislature needs to thoroughly assess the bill's compatibility with existing federal mandates.

VAI will continue advocating on behalf of our members to oppose this bill.

International Update

Report Finds EU Failing to Support Sustainable Biofuels in Transportation

The European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health, and Food Safety (ENVI) recently discussed a special report by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) highlighting the rising greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union (EU) transport sector and the failure of most EU member states to meet 2020 targets due to challenges such as limited capacity for biofuels, sustainability concerns, and the high cost of biofuel compared with fossil fuel. The report identified the lack of clear guidance from the EU Commission and emphasized the need for a sustainable long-term perspective.

Members of the European Parliament offered recommendations including stricter regulations on feedstock sourcing, removal of unsustainable sources such as palm oil, and reevaluation of biofuel effectiveness in achieving decarbonization goals.

In response, the EU Commission acknowledged the need for long-term perspectives and highlighted initiatives such as the Fit for 55 package and the Renewable Energy Directive. However, the concerns highlighted above remain.

Regional Representative Update

By Josh Rousseau, VAI Northeastern US Regional Representative



Josh Rousseau, VAI Northeastern US Regional Representative, recently met with New York State Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo to discuss vertical aviation priorities in the state.

Since returning from HAI HELI-EXPO 2024, I have been on the road continuing to advocate for our priorities in meetings with VAI members, elected officials, and community groups.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to spend time at the Kearny Heliport with Jeff Hyman of Helo Holdings and Paul Tramontana from the Eastern Region Helicopter Council for a very productive conversation about community compatibility and the great progress being made to respond to community concerns about operations in the greater New York/New Jersey metropolitan area.

Recently, I also had the privilege of meeting with New York State Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (Assembly District 123), cochair of the New York Legislative Aviation Caucus. I appreciated the time she spared to discuss effective approaches to community

compatibility and the infrastructure needs for current and future vertical aviation priorities in New York state.

Just last week, I had an amazing visit with the talented team at BETA Technologies at their flight test center in Plattsburgh, New York. Their groundbreaking work on electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft and charging technology is truly impressive. I was fortunate to be joined by New York State Assemblyman Billy Jones (Assembly District 115); Chris Kreig, manager, Plattsburgh International Airport (KPBG); Molly Ryan, executive director, Clinton County (New York) Industrial Development Agency; and Mark Heny, chair, Clinton County Legislature.

As I continue to pound the pavement throughout the Northeast, I would like to hear from any of you out there about potential visits and opportunities to discuss our mutual priorities. Please contact me at JoshR@verticalavi.org. In the meantime, stay safe out there and keep *Powering Up!*

[Click here](#) to manage how often you receive emails from VAI.

Vertical Aviation International

Powering Up

[Join VAI](#)

703-683-4646 | +1 703 6834646

verticalavi.org | Info@verticalavi.org



1920 Ballenger Ave., 4th Flr., Alexandria, VA 22314-2898 USA