



Issue Overview, Oct. 16, 2023

US NEWS

Congressional Update

[Senate Committee Holds Nomination Hearing for FAA Administrator Candidate](#)

State and Local Updates

[HAI Discusses State of the Industry at Arizona Airport Association Conference](#)

[Utah Rotor Pathway Program Holds 2nd Annual Fly-In Event](#)

[California SB-800 Signed into Law](#)

[HAI Welcomes New Northeast US Regional Representative](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Europe

[European Parliament Adopts ReFuelEU Rules to Decarbonize the Aviation Sector](#)

US NEWS

Congressional Update

Senate Committee Holds Nomination Hearing for FAA Administrator Candidate

Summary of Facts

Last week, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation conducted a nomination hearing for Michael Whitaker, President Biden's nominee for the role of FAA administrator. Whitaker has garnered substantial support from both the commercial and general aviation industries as well as bipartisan backing. The upcoming Senate committee vote on Oct. 18 is expected to favor Whitaker, advancing his nomination. Upon a successful committee vote, Whitaker's nomination would then move to the full Senate for approval.

HAI Position and Actions

HAI emphasizes the importance of Whitaker's nomination progressing and is excited about the potential appointment of a permanent FAA administrator to lead the agency.

State and Local Updates

HAI Discusses State of the Industry at Arizona Airport Association Conference



Summary of Facts

Last week, Katia Veraza (pictured above), manager of government affairs at HAI, spoke at the Arizona Airport Association's annual conference. As a panelist, she delivered an overview of critical issues affecting the rotorcraft industry at Arizona airports and nationwide. Her discussion spanned topics including infrastructure and accessibility, advanced air mobility (AAM), the EAGLE (Eliminate Aviation Gasoline Lead Emissions) initiative, and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

HAI Position and Actions

Our contribution to the dialogue in Arizona is aimed at fostering the sustained growth of the vertical flight industry within the state. HAI was happy to participate, and we look forward to expanding our involvement in Arizona.

Utah Rotor Pathway Program Holds 2nd Annual Fly-In Event

Summary of Facts

The Utah Rotor Pathway Program (URPP) held its second annual fly-in on Oct. 5, 2023, at the Davis Catalyst Center in Kaysville, Utah. This event, which featured multiple helicopters and numerous industry displays, introduced students to the world of vertical flight and the many exciting job opportunities it offers. The event featured pilots and mechanics sharing their experience in and passion for the helicopter industry. The event allowed students to interact with those already in the industry, see helicopters up close, and learn how they can pursue careers in this field.

The URPP serves as a first-in-the-nation model for education and training programs preparing high school students for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) careers in rotary-wing aviation. The program connects rotorcraft industry professionals with high schools, flight schools, and universities to offer benefits such as mentoring, internships, and job interviews upon students' completion of rotary-wing aviation programs.

HAI Position and Actions

Industry support for the pathway program is essential. HAI thanks the following operators, which generously gave of their time and resources to participate in the second annual URPP fly-in: Classic Air Medical, Intermountain Life Flight, Mountain West Helicopters, PHI Air Medical, PHI Americas, Robotic Skies, Southern Utah University, Universal Helicopters, the Utah Department of Public Safety Aero Bureau, Utah State University, and Zipline.



Students meet with a crew from Intermountain Life Flight, one of the operators that participated in the second annual Utah Rotor Pathway Program fly-in on Oct. 5 at the Davis Catalyst Center in Kaysville, Utah. *(Photo: Cade Clark)*

California SB-800 Signed into Law

Summary of Facts

Last week, California enacted Senate Bill No. 800, a pivotal law addressing advanced air mobility (AAM) technology. The legislation mandates that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in collaboration with the California Office of Planning and Research and the California Air Resources Board, form an advisory committee. This committee is tasked with evaluating various aspects of AAM adoption, including viable approaches for implementing electrification goals within the aviation sector. The legislation also requires the committee to report its findings no later than Jan. 1, 2025.

HAI Position and Actions

HAI had previously submitted written testimony and a coalition letter endorsing SB-800, and we are pleased to see its successful passage. We are encouraged to see California facilitating the secure and efficient integration of AAM into the state's vertical aviation market.

HAI Welcomes New Northeast US Regional Representative

We are excited to introduce our new Northeast US regional representative, Josh Rousseau.

Josh has worked at the highest levels of the New York State government for nearly 25 years. His career has taken him from the assistant speaker's office of the state assembly to the governor's office, as assistant secretary for legislative affairs, to executive leadership posts at critical state agencies, including the New York State Department of Transportation.

Josh possesses not only an innate and thorough understanding of legislative processes but also brings with him intricate knowledge of the inner workings of state government and the needs of elected officials, stakeholders (both public and private), and advocates. Additionally, he has significant experience overseeing high-priority projects and navigating government operations.

Please feel free to contact Josh at josh.rousseau@rotor.org if you are based in the northeastern United States.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Europe

European Parliament Adopts ReFuelEU Rules to Decarbonize the Aviation Sector

Summary of Facts

The European Parliament has approved the ReFuelEU aviation rules, part of the Fit for 55 package of proposals adopted by the European Commission in July 2021. ReFuelEU seeks to boost sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs) in the European Union (EU) air transport market. The new law aligns air transport with EU climate targets for 2030 and 2050, addressing issues such as low supply and high SAF prices compared with fossil fuels.

Fit for 55 aims to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions, by 2030, by at least 55% compared with 1990 levels. The package encompasses the European Union's climate, energy, land-use, transportation, and taxation policies.

ReFuelEU mandates that aviation fuel suppliers include a minimum share of SAF in fuel provided at EU airports as follows: 2% in 2025, 6% in 2030, and 70% in 2050. From 2030 on, 1.2% must be synthetic fuels, rising to 35% by 2050. Aircraft operators must uplift at least 90% of yearly aviation fuel required at an EU airport to avoid additional emissions from excess weight.

The regulation, to be published soon, comes into force on the 20th day after publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*, effective from Jan. 1, 2024. However, certain articles of the regulation will apply from Jan. 1, 2025, on.

Read More

- [pdf.\(europa.eu\)](#).
- [Fit for 55 and ReFuelEU Aviation](#).

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