



Issue Overview, Sep. 8, 2023

US News

[White House Nominates Michael Whitaker as FAA Administrator](#)

[HAI Heads to NASAO 2023 Conference](#)

[White House Seeks FAA Extension](#)

[Looming Deadline for Fiscal Year 2024 Funding Bills](#)

International News

[EASA Proposes Rules for VTOL Operations](#)

US News

White House Nominates Michael Whitaker as FAA Administrator

HAI applauds the White House's announcement Sep. 7 of the nomination of Michael G. Whitaker to serve as FAA administrator.

"Mike's 30 years of aviation policy experience give him the knowledge and skill set to effectively lead the FAA," says James Viola, HAI president and CEO. "I worked closely with Mike during my tenure overseeing general aviation at the FAA, and from what I saw, I am confident he is the right person to lead the agency at a time when aviation—particularly vertical aviation—is evolving at such a rapid pace."

Viola cites Whitaker's leadership of the FAA's [Next Generation Air Transportation System \(NextGen\)](#), the government's effort to modernize the use of the nation's airspace, as essential experience that will help the agency safely incorporate new entrants into American aviation.

“Vertical aviation is leading the future with advanced helicopter technology, electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, uncrewed aircraft system (UAS) operations, and continued innovation across the vertical flight sector. As our industry moves forward, it is critical that the United States has strong leadership at the FAA to provide global regulatory guidance while continuing to set the gold standard in safety. HAI is confident Mike will provide that leadership,” says Viola.

Whitaker served as FAA deputy administrator during the Obama administration in addition to serving as NextGen chief. Before that, he spent decades in the airline industry. Most recently, Whitaker has been the chief operating officer of Supernal, where he helped develop eVTOL vehicles.

HAI urges the Senate to move forward with Whitaker’s nomination process quickly.

HAI Heads to NASAO 2023 Conference

This week, Katia Veraza, manager of government affairs at HAI, will be heading to the 92nd Annual Convention & Trade Show of the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), which takes place Sep. 9–13 in Rogers, Arkansas. The convention’s agenda will delve into the various issues affecting aviation across the United States.

The NASAO conference is attended by influential decision makers and key figures who span a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in aviation. Their collective presence at the conference aims to foster discussions about and generate innovative solutions within the rotorcraft industry. As a result, the annual event holds significant importance for HAI.

We’d love to connect with HAI members planning to attend the show. Feel free to reach out to katia.veraza@rotor.org to let us know you’ll be there. We look forward to seeing you!

White House Seeks FAA Extension

Last week, the White House informed Congress that unless federal aviation programs are included in other legislation, they will require an extension through a short-term funding bill, increasing the likelihood that lawmakers will resort to such a temporary measure due to ongoing disagreements.

With a looming Sep. 30 deadline for FAA reauthorization, senators returned from recess this week without a compromise to advance the bill through committee. Whereas the House of Representatives passed its five-year FAA bill (H.R.3935) in July, Senate action on its own version (S.1939) has stalled due to disputes over pilot training rules. Consequently, it is likely Congress will require a short-term extension for federal aviation program authorization.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) emphasizes that the FAA bill is just one of several major priorities that need to be addressed in the coming weeks.

HAI remains engaged with committees in both chambers to help advance FAA reauthorization legislation that retains the hard-fought wins that were included in the House-passed version of the bill.

Looming Deadline for Fiscal Year 2024 Funding Bills

The Biden administration has urged Congress to adopt a comprehensive stopgap government funding solution as part of its formal appeal to avoid a government shutdown on Oct. 1. As of now, Congress has not yet approved any of the 12 annual spending bills required to fund the upcoming federal fiscal year. The Senate is gearing up to commence floor debates as early as next week on a “minibus” funding package showcasing bipartisan cooperation.

Senate appropriations leaders have unveiled a package that combines three fiscal 2024 funding bills they approved during the summer, among them the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2024 (S.2437), which pertains to appropriations for the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as related agencies, for the fiscal year ending Sep. 30, 2024. The bill addresses other concerns as well.

Introduced in June, S.2437 was unanimously approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee in a 29–0 vote. The committee approved the draft text, a summary, and a bill report along with a list of adopted amendments and spending projects. This measure entails over \$98.9 billion in discretionary spending, with more than \$70 billion allocated for HUD and \$28.4 billion designated for the DOT.

In late July, Speaker of the House Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.-20) hosted a GOP members-only call, during which he proposed a short-term funding bill extending until mid-December. However, the House Freedom Caucus has responded by asserting their unwillingness to endorse a short-term continuing resolution (CR) unless specific conditions are met, such as securing border funding, implementing spending cuts, and withholding funding for Ukraine, among other demands. House Democratic Leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.-08), on the other hand, has expressed opposition to the conservative demands but has indicated a potential willingness to consider an amicable stopgap solution.

In essence, the House currently lacks a definitive course of action, thereby heightening the likelihood of a government shutdown Oct. 1.

International News

EASA Proposes Rules for VTOL Operations

Last week, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) issued [Opinion No 03/2023](#), focusing on the safe operation of vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft. The opinion introduces a regulatory framework aimed at addressing novel operational and mobility concepts rooted in innovative technologies. Its overarching goal is to encourage and facilitate the acceptance and adoption of these concepts among European citizens.

Opinion No 03/2023 recommends changes to existing European Union (EU) aviation regulations and introduces two new regulations targeting the following areas:

- Enhancing the initial airworthiness standards for uncrewed aircraft systems (UASs) that require certification under Article 40 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/945, and improving the ongoing airworthiness requirements for UASs that require certification under, and are operated within, the “specific” category

- Outlining operational requirements for crewed vertical takeoff and landing–capable aircraft (VCA).

The specific aim of these proposed amendments includes:

- Ensuring a consistently high level of safety for specific-category UASs requiring certification
- Facilitating the safe operation of crewed VCA in the Single European Sky (SES)
- Establishing the necessary conditions for the secure operation of UASs and crewed VCA within U-space airspace
- Fostering innovation and advancement in the realm of innovative air mobility (IAM) while creating a well-structured regulatory framework.

Furthermore, these proposed amendments seek to harmonize the regulatory landscape across EU member states by addressing disparities within fragmented regulatory systems.

[Manage](#) how often you receive emails from HAI.

Helicopter Association International
THE Trade Association for the International VTOL Community
Working Each Day to Keep the Rotors Turning

[Join HAI](#)

703-683-4646 | +1 703 6834646

www.rotor.org | rotor@rotor.org



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