



Issue Overview, Jan. 22, 2024

Congressional Update

[Congress Passes Stopgap Spending Bill](#)

[Haleakalā National Park ATMP Reduces Sightseeing Flights by More than 50%](#)

[HAI, GA Stakeholders Urge Congress to Swiftly Reauthorize the FAA](#)

State and Local Updates

[HAI, Industry Address Relativity Space Tower Project at Long Beach Airport](#)

International Updates

[Rotterdam Kicks Off SAF Implementation Target](#)

Congressional Update

Congress Passes Stopgap Spending Bill

Summary of Facts

The US Congress passed legislation to prevent a partial government shutdown, sending the bill to President Biden just one day before funding was set to run out. The House of Representatives voted 314 to 108, following the Senate's 77-18 bipartisan approval, avoiding a shutdown on Friday, Jan. 19.

The legislation provides an additional six weeks of funding, allowing lawmakers to negotiate and pass spending bills for the government through the fall. President Biden signed the bill before the Friday midnight deadline, marking the third temporary spending extension since the fiscal year began Oct. 1, 2023.

The legislation ensures funding until Mar. 1 for the Departments of Transportation, Housing, Energy, Agriculture, and Veterans Affairs and other federal operations. Funding for the remainder, including the Department of Defense, expires on Mar. 8.

HAI Position and Actions

HAI emphasizes the importance of Congress passing a long-term spending bill, which provides the resources for the FAA to effectively fulfill its mission to ensure the safety of our national airspace.

Haleakalā National Park ATMP Reduces Sightseeing Flights by More than 50%

Summary of Facts

The US National Park Service (NPS) and the FAA have jointly released an air tour management plan (ATMP) for Haleakalā National Park in Hawaii, reducing the number of sightseeing flights permitted within the park by 54%. In late December, the two agencies released the ATMP for Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, cutting flights from 11,300 to 1,548 air tours per year on three specific routes. Following the 180-day implementation period by the FAA, the plan will become operational.

The ATMPs for Haleakalā and Hawaii Volcanoes National Parks are part of a broader initiative by the NPS and the FAA to comply with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act, which guides the development or refinement of air tour plans for several national parks.

In a related context, three helicopter tour companies have initiated legal action, filing consolidated lawsuits against the FAA and the NPS in the US Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Black Hills Aerial Adventures and Rushmore Helicopters seek a review of the ATMP for Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, which prohibits air tours over the park and within half a mile of its boundary. A similar challenge is being presented by Badger Helicopters against the ATMP for Badlands National Park, also in South Dakota. Both lawsuits were filed on Jan. 11 of this year.

HAI Position and Actions

HAI has been carefully monitoring the adoption of ATMPs for national parks by the FAA and the NPS. The purpose of these plans should be to ensure a balance of interest among stakeholders, which include the operators of helicopter air tours and their passengers. Unfortunately, for Mount Rushmore and Badlands, the federal agencies took the draconian step of prohibiting air tours altogether. HAI does not believe that decision is warranted or consistent with federal law.

HAI, GA Stakeholders Urge Congress to Swiftly Reauthorize the FAA

Summary of Facts

HAI and fellow general aviation (GA) stakeholders have jointly submitted a coalition letter to Congress urging prompt action on the FAA reauthorization. The focus is on expeditiously marking up S.1939, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2023, within the US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The urgency arises due to the critical implications for aviation safety, industry jobs, and economic growth.

The US aviation sector, contributing approximately 5% of the country's GDP and supporting over 10 million jobs, underscores the pressing need for a comprehensive, long-term reauthorization bill. The looming expiration of the second FAA extension on Mar. 8, 2024, intensifies this need.

Emphasizing the intricate nature of the air transportation system, HAI stresses the imperative of maintaining the US airspace as the safest globally. The FAA's ability to uphold this safety standard depends on the stability a multiyear reauthorization bill will provide. Failure to promptly reauthorize the agency poses a direct threat to the National Airspace System, risking insufficient staffing and infrastructure and potentially disrupting aviation operations.

With the Mar. 8 deadline less than two months away, the call to action is explicit: the Commerce Committee must swiftly advance the bill to provide ample time for both the House and the Senate to complete their deliberations. Additional extensions only exacerbate delays, underscoring the critical need for long-term authorization.

HAI Position and Actions

HAI underscores the importance of enacting the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2023 as a pivotal move for aviation safety. This legislation establishes the essential groundwork for the stability, investment, and strategic planning crucial to the industry's mission of ensuring safe and efficient transportation. We are grateful to Congress for addressing this urgent matter and eagerly anticipate collaborating with both the House and the Senate in passing a comprehensive, long-term FAA reauthorization bill. It is imperative to act promptly to ensure the ongoing success and safety of the US aviation sector.

State and Local Updates

HAI, Industry Address Relativity Space Tower Project at Long Beach Airport

Summary of Facts

HAI, in collaboration with industry stakeholders, has addressed concerns regarding Relativity Space's proposed 200-ft. tower at Long Beach Airport (KLGB) in Long Beach, California. The FAA is currently reviewing the project, and HAI is advocating for a thorough assessment of potential risks to airspace, the community, and the vertical flight industry.

Relativity Space seeks FAA approval for a tower/pad dedicated to static testing, leading to the opening of four obstruction evaluation files. The industry urges the FAA to seek public input to ensure a comprehensive evaluation, considering the complex airspace in the Los Angeles and Orange County region.

The proposed location raises concerns about impacts on flight patterns, aircraft navigation, noise contours, and overall safety for both airspace and adjacent communities. Despite assurances about the absence of hazardous material testing or launch activities, there is a need for detailed consideration due to potential implications for commercial space manufacturing operations.

Our coalition letter calls for a collaborative process involving the FAA, airport operators, aircraft operators, and the aviation business community. We emphasize the importance of exploring alternative locations or lower heights for the tower to mitigate potential risks and liabilities, ensuring a safe and seamless integration into the community.

HAI Position and Actions

As the FAA reevaluates Relativity's submission, **HAI underscores the necessity for a careful and comprehensive assessment of safety, community impacts, and noise considerations.** The association remains committed to fostering a collaborative dialogue to address concerns and find solutions that prioritize aviation safety and community compatibility.

International Updates

Rotterdam Kicks Off SAF Implementation Target

Shell and Rotterdam The Hague Airport (EHRD) have agreed to introduce sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) in all airport-fueled aircraft starting this month. In addition to the European Union's blending mandate of achieving 6% SAF by 2030, EHRD is setting a minimum extra target of 8%, aligning with the Dutch aviation sector's goal of achieving a 14% SAF blend by 2030.