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US Federal Update

Key Aviation-Related Congressional Committees Welcome New Members

Summary of Facts

With the start of the 119th US Congress, key committees for the vertical aviation industry have welcomed new members. Concurrently, VAI has outlined its 2025 federal priorities, focusing on workforce development, aviation safety, regulatory improvements, and infrastructure integration.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

The Republican Steering Committee, with input from House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chair Sam Graves (R-Mo.-06), has added the following members to the T&I Committee: Rep. Tony Wied (R-Wis.-08), Rep. Tom Barrett (R-Mich.-07), Rep. Nick Begich (R-Alaska), Rep. Brad Knott (R-N.C.-13), Rep. Addison McDowell (R-N.C.-06), Rep. Jefferson Shreve (R-Ind.-06), Rep. Rob Bresnahan (R-Pa.-08), Rep. Jeff Hurd (R-Colo.-03), Rep. Kimberlyn King-Hinds (R-Northern Mariana

Islands), and Rep. Dave Taylor (R-Ohio-02).

Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee has welcomed new Republican members Sen. John Curtis (Utah), Sen. Bernie Moreno (Ohio), and Sen. Tim Sheehy (Montana).

VAI Position and Actions

VAI is eager to collaborate with the Senate and House transportation committees to advance key objectives. These include:

- **Workforce development:** Addressing workforce shortages through career training programs
- **Aviation safety:** Enhancing safety via safety management systems and other tools
- **FAA reauthorization:** Supporting the timely implementation of reauthorization measures
- **Regulatory improvements:** Engaging stakeholders to refine regulations critical to the industry's growth
- **Advanced air mobility (AAM) integration:** Facilitating AAM incorporation into the National Airspace System.

By working closely with policymakers, regulators, and industry stakeholders, VAI remains committed to promoting innovation, ensuring safety, and representing its members as the industry evolves.

State and Local Updates

San Antonio AAM Study a Valuable Tool for Other Cities

Summary of Facts

Port San Antonio has published a comprehensive advanced air mobility (AAM) market study offering a city-focused perspective on the emerging industry. Port San Antonio, a technology and innovation campus in Texas, is home to over 80 tenants and 18,000 employees spanning sectors such as aerospace, defense, robotics, global logistics, manufacturing, cybersecurity, and education. With its robust workforce and status as one of South Texas's largest industrial sites, the facility generates over \$5 billion annually in economic activity.

The campus's new study outlines a vision with near- and long-term goals to integrate AAM benefits for stakeholders, including businesses, residents, and public-service providers. The 56-page report provides:

- **A foundational overview:** Insights into AAM, unmanned aircraft systems, urban air mobility, and regional air mobility (RAM) covering business applications, infrastructure needs, and other critical concepts

- **San Antonio–specific use cases:** Detailed scenarios for passenger mobility, RAM, cargo operations, and emergency response, including:
 - Applications and benefits
 - Aircraft types and fuel requirements
 - Flight altitudes and routes
 - Timelines
 - Infrastructure needs
 - Target audiences
 - Key advantages.

Unlike broader state or local reports, the study includes identification of potential vertiport and vertistop locations; an analysis of transportation and infrastructure gaps; and a preliminary funding and investment plan detailing potential sources from federal, state, and local levels. The study concludes with practical recommendations for implementing AAM in the near and medium terms, serving as a valuable reference for other cities and states planning their AAM strategies.

VAI Position and Actions

VAI applauds Port San Antonio for developing this market study, which sets a benchmark for other cities seeking to integrate AAM into their transportation networks. The report underscores the importance of aligning AAM development with local stakeholders' needs while addressing critical issues such as infrastructure planning—a key priority for VAI. By offering specific routes, locations, and funding mechanisms, this report stands out as a forward-thinking resource in advancing AAM integration.

VAI Ensures Safety for Operators at Gateway Program

Summary of Facts

The Gateway Program encompasses critical rail-infrastructure improvements along the US Northeast Corridor, addressing the corridor's most congested 10-mile section. This initiative aims to enhance resiliency and double passenger train capacity under the Hudson River into New York Penn Station, the nation's busiest rail hub.

A key component of the program is the Hudson Tunnel Project, which involves constructing a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River and rehabilitating the existing North River Tunnel, which was damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Cranes have been stationed in the Hudson River for months as part of this extensive effort.

Reports recently highlighted nighttime visibility and lighting issues involving project cranes in the Hudson River. VAI Northeastern Regional Representative Josh Rousseau swiftly collaborated with Gateway project partners and local operators to address these concerns.

As a result:

- Gateway staff and FAA officials confirmed that all lighting systems are fully operational.

- A boom tip light was repositioned for improved visibility.
- Twenty-four-hour lighting was installed at the river site to enhance safety.

These measures have significantly improved operational safety for aviation in the area.

VAI Position and Actions

VAI continues to advocate for vertical aviation safety considerations with project stakeholders, ensuring that they remain a priority. VAI commends the Gateway team for their responsiveness and collaboration in promoting a safe operating environment around the Hudson Tunnel Project.

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