



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2025

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PRESS RELEASE

VAI Responds to NYC Council Vote to Severely Restrict Helicopter Operations

Bill undermines future of aviation in that city

Alexandria, VA (Apr. 24, 2025) -- In a move that Vertical Aviation International (VAI) strongly opposes, the New York City Council today passed [Int. 0026-A](#), legislation that severely restricts nonessential helicopter operations at city-managed heliports and will ultimately prohibit all but fully electric-powered aircraft.

"This is one of the most extreme political assaults on the vertical aviation industry we've seen in the Northeast," says Josh Rousseau, VAI Northeastern US Regional Representative. "This bill doesn't just aim to curb noise or address environmental concerns—it effectively seeks to push an entire industry out of one of the world's busiest and most vital economic corridors."

VAI has led a broad industry coalition—including the Eastern Region Helicopter Council (ERHC), the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA), and the National Air Transportation Association (NATA)—in opposing this legislation. Despite numerous warnings about the bill's wide-reaching consequences, the Council voted to adopt measures that bypass federal authority, jeopardize safety standards, and undermine critical infrastructure investments.

"This vote signals to the global aviation community that New York is closed for business," Rousseau continues. "It discourages the very investments needed to bring about quieter, cleaner, more sustainable air mobility technologies."

The bill's passage comes as the vertical aviation industry is actively advancing next-generation aircraft such as electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) vehicles. These innovations depend on robust, existing infrastructure—and inclusive public policy—to succeed.

"VAI and helicopter operators in the region have always worked with—and will continue to work with—residents, the Council, and the FAA to find solutions that are both safe and sensible for everyone," Rousseau adds. "However, under federal law, the FAA has sole jurisdiction over US airspace, which puts this bill in direct conflict with federal authority."

Vertical Aviation International

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VAI maintains that helicopter operations—including emergency response, infrastructure inspection, law enforcement, and business mobility—are essential to the functioning of New York City. Forcing their removal not only threatens public safety and economic productivity but also undermines the FAA’s ability to administer the National Airspace System.

“Safety, innovation, and community engagement have always been at the heart of what we do,” says Rousseau. “We remain committed to those principles—and we’ll defend the future of vertical aviation in New York and across the country.”

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Vertical Aviation International (VAI), formerly Helicopter Association International (HAI), is the world’s leading membership association dedicated to the vertical aviation industry, which encompasses all aircraft capable of vertical or short takeoff and landing. Throughout its 76 years of fueling industry growth through connection, advocacy, safety, education, and support for its members’ success, VAI has leveraged the power of vertical flight to strengthen communities worldwide. The association welcomes all facets of the vertical aviation industry, including manufacturers, operators, suppliers and vendors, pilots and maintenance technicians, and other aviation professionals. For more information about VAI, please visit: <https://verticalavi.org>.

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