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### US Federal Updates

#### Air Traffic Control Modernization Plan Unveiled

##### *Summary of Facts*

US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy has unveiled a sweeping proposal to overhaul the nation's aging air traffic control (ATC) infrastructure, urging Congress to approve full up-front funding and streamline permitting processes to avoid the delays

that have plagued previous modernization efforts.

The plan, which is intended to be implemented over the next three to four years, would upgrade more than 4,500 sites with new radios and telecommunications systems, deploy over 600 modern radars, and expand surface detection technology at airports to enhance safety. An important element includes consolidating the FAA's 21 air traffic centers into 6 state-of-the-art hubs—an effort that could face regional resistance but is framed as a technical necessity driven by outdated infrastructure.

While the plan does not yet include a formal cost estimate, Duffy has previously said it would require “tens of billions” of dollars. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has already approved \$12.5 billion as a starting point, calling it a “down payment” toward broader modernization.

Lawmakers across the aisle have long recognized the urgent need to upgrade ATC systems to support growing demands from traditional aviation and emerging technologies such as drones and advanced air mobility. As the aviation industry evolves, a modernized, efficient, and unified ATC network is essential to ensuring continued safety, economic competitiveness, and operational resilience in the US National Airspace System.

### ***VAI Position and Actions***

**VAI joined nearly 60 aviation organizations in signing the May 8 [Modern Skies Coalition letter](#) supporting the modernization of the nation's ATC system.** VAI continues to engage directly with congressional leaders and administration officials to ensure that low-altitude and vertical flight operations are fully represented and prioritized throughout the modernization process.

## **FAA Requests Data from Bell 206L Users**

The FAA is reaching out to the US rotorcraft industry to request information on your experience with in-flight abnormal vertical vibration in Bell 206L helicopters.

Your feedback is requested by Mon., Aug. 4, 2025.

Please review this [Airworthiness Concern Sheet](#) (ACS), which provides more details about:

- The concern identified by the FAA
- The specific information requested
- The email address where you can send any information you wish to share.

**Note: Your participation is voluntary.** This ACS does not convey regulatory or mandatory information. Please see below for more information about the FAA's ACS Program.

### ***The FAA ACS Program***

The ACS is a new FAA program designed to:

- **Alert the industry** to a potential airworthiness issue

- **Request voluntary feedback** from the industry that will inform FAA analysis and further action on the issue.

**Your participation is voluntary.** An ACS does not convey regulatory or mandatory information, and industry input is requested on a voluntary basis.

**ACS benefits:** The ACS Program is designed to:

- Provide the industry with more efficient, rapid notice of safety concerns
- Create a path for the industry to share relevant data with the FAA
- Produce more-informed FAA airworthiness decisions, including airworthiness directives (ADs) and special airworthiness information bulletins (SAIBs).

**ACS outcome:** The FAA will use the information provided by the industry to inform its analysis of the issue at hand. After reaching a determination, the FAA may choose to issue an AD or SAIB, or it may determine that no corrective action is needed at this time.

*Editor's note: This information is intended for readers operating in the United States.*

## US State and Local Updates

### Washington State Aviation Alert

#### *Summary of Facts*

On Apr. 27, the Washington State Legislature passed [S.B.5801](#), which would impose an additional 10% tax on the portion of any noncommercial aircraft sale, lease, or transfer exceeding \$500,000, effective Jan. 1, 2026. The revenue would be directed to the Move Ahead WA Flexible Account, which is used for transportation projects in the state. The bill has been sent to Gov. Bob Ferguson (D), who has 20 days to sign or veto it.

#### *VAI Position and Actions*

**VAI and industry partners oppose this bill.** Labeling aircraft as “luxury” based solely on value disregards their critical use in emergency response, medical transport, and economic activity across diverse communities. This tax could increase costs, reduce access to aviation services, and drive aircraft purchases to nearby states such as Oregon and Idaho.

VAI has joined multiple associations in submitting two coalition letters urging the governor to veto S.B.5801. (Please see [“Opposition to WA S.B.5801”](#) and [“WA E.S.S.B.5801 – Request Veto Part II, Sections 207 and 208.”](#))

Washington residents who wish to oppose the bill or learn more about its impact are encouraged to contact Katia Veraza, assistant director of government affairs and regional relations, at [KatiaV@verticalavi.org](mailto:KatiaV@verticalavi.org).

### Montana Bill Protecting ADS-B Data from Fee-Based Use Heads to

## Governor's Desk

### *Summary of Facts*

**Montana [H.B.571](#)**, which passed the state legislature and has been sent to the governor for action, **prohibits any state governmental entity or private company from using ADS-B data to calculate or impose fees on aircraft owners or operators flying within Montana's borders.**

If passed, this legislation would ensure that ADS-B technology—originally intended to enhance safety, situational awareness, and air traffic efficiency—is not misused for revenue generation or tracking-based fee structures.

### *VAI Position and Actions*

**VAI supports this bill.** By protecting operators from potential overreach, Montana promotes a more predictable and fairer operating environment, encouraging continued investment, innovation, and service by the general aviation community, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas where our industry plays a critical role in emergency response, public safety, and utility support.

## News from VAI's Northeastern US Regional Representative

### **“Advocacy in Action,” by Josh Rousseau, VAI Northeastern US Regional Representative**

Helicopters are essential to New York City's transportation, commerce, and emergency response systems. So, too, do the city's heliports serve as vital infrastructure, linking the region to national and global networks. Yet, despite its critical role in the area, the vertical aviation industry continues to face political pressure.

Recently, the New York City Council passed [Int. 0026-A](#), one of the most aggressive anti-aviation measures in the region. The law severely limits nonessential helicopter operations at city-managed heliports and aims to ultimately ban all but fully electric-powered aircraft. This action follows heightened scrutiny of the industry, including after a recent Hudson River accident.

The legislation disregards federal authority over airspace, undermines safety protocols, and threatens investments in crucial aviation infrastructure. It also risks stifling innovation at a time when the industry is advancing electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) technology, which requires a supportive regulatory environment and access to existing infrastructure.

VAI led a coalition of aviation organizations—including the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Eastern Region Helicopter Council, General Aviation Manufacturers Association, National Business Aviation Association, and National Air Transportation Association—in opposing the bill. After more than a year of advocacy and engagement with city and federal regulators, VAI helped secure amendments that preserve limited operations at the two city-owned heliports and allow for continued infrastructure development.

This outcome highlights the urgent need for the federal government to reaffirm its authority over national airspace and prevent a patchwork of conflicting local laws. Decisions affecting vertical aviation must be guided by safety, expertise, and national standards—not local politics.

VAI remains committed to advocating for fairness, safety, and innovation in New York and throughout the Northeastern United States. We will continue working to protect the future of vertical aviation and ensure its continued contributions to economic growth and public service.

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