



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 3, 2025

Contact: Bailey Wood

Email: BaileyW@verticalavi.org

Phone: 571-234-5582

PRESS RELEASE

VAI Applauds Congressional Passage of \$12.5 Billion for ATC Modernization

Investment is critical down payment on strengthening airspace safety.

Alexandria, Va (Jul. 3, 2025) – Vertical Aviation International (VAI) today praised final passage by the US Congress of \$12.5 billion in funding for air traffic control (ATC) modernization. The funds were included in the budget reconciliation package that is now headed to the president's desk.

"This is a long-overdue and essential investment in the future of our National Airspace System (NAS)," says Mike Hertzendorf, COO of VAI. "We commend both the House and Senate for recognizing the urgent need to upgrade outdated infrastructure and for coming together to move this funding forward."

VAI has been an active participant in the [Modern Skies Coalition](#)—a broad alliance of aviation and aerospace organizations advocating for targeted investment in ATC technology and facilities. The coalition has worked to ensure that modernization remains a priority amid growing operational demands and persistent system strain.

Hertzendorf added that the \$12.5 billion represents a critical first step—a down payment—on the long-term process of transforming the NAS to better serve current and future aviation users, including the vertical aviation community.

The budgeted funds include \$80 million for automated and visual weather-observing systems, marking a significant win for the vertical aviation community. This funding will expand the deployment of weather cameras in remote and weather-challenged regions, providing critical real-time data to enhance pilot situational awareness and improve flight safety.

"Modernization is not optional—it's a safety imperative and a prerequisite for accommodating emerging vertical aircraft and operations," says Hertzendorf. "This funding marks meaningful progress toward those goals, and VAI looks forward to continued engagement with the FAA and Congress to ensure it is implemented effectively and sustained in the years ahead."

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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,

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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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