

House Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature

Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**RE: Vertiport Infrastructure**

As representatives of the international vertical flight industry, the Helicopter Association International (HAI) would like to express our concerns regarding HB 2834. HAI represents more than 1,100 companies and over 16,000 industry professionals in more than 65 countries. HAI's members operate the full scope of vertical aviation aircraft, both crewed and uncrewed, logging over 3 million flight hours annually. The leading AAM companies comprise HAI's AAM Industry Advisory Council (AAM-IAC), which was formed to identify issues, develop solutions, and advance initiatives to address industry's most pressing AAM challenges. HAI is ideally positioned to lead and support the vertical aviation community as it embraces the next generation of technology and flight operations.

AAM operations are poised to begin as soon as 2024, with new aircraft achieving certification under conventional pathways. To advance to a more mature scale, many disparate challenges involving multiple stakeholders must be addressed. Keeping Oregon statutes unambiguous and providing clarity around infrastructure policy are two key goals of the AAM industry.

While a lot of attention is being paid to new AAM aircraft, there remains the essential question of where these aircraft will take off from and land. To enable the many use cases envisioned, we need to both avail existing infrastructure and develop new infrastructure, as well as plan needed capabilities and partnerships. While the industry will continue to leverage existing airport and heliport facilities, new complementary infrastructure will support increased AAM operations. Creating such infrastructure will require the combined efforts of industry and regulators to facilitate and enhance the AAM experience.

There exist both public and private infrastructure, both of which are important elements of an eventual AAM network of operations. Currently, the language drafted in HB 2834 is ambiguous. There is a lack of clarity around what constitutes a public or private use vertiport and how operators can operate them. Limiting an infrastructure operator from operating more than one vertiport could stifle private sector investment in vertiports, reduce the likelihood that rural communities in Oregon will have access to AAM, and prevent aviation authorities from providing unified operations across their community.

It is important to note that there are a limited number of private sector companies looking to build and operate vertiports, and due to the limited range of eVTOL aircraft, it is unlikely that a company will want to invest in a single vertiport if there is not a destination within range. Most vertiport infrastructure companies are looking at building a network of vertiports. If vertiport operators can only operate one private-use vertiport in Oregon, they will choose to operate vertiports in major cities where volume is likely to be higher. In addition, if companies such as medical cargo and logistic providers need to build a private vertiport but are prevented from doing so, smaller communities will lack additional access to these

services. Furthermore, any aviation authority managing more than one airport would be required to find a different operator for each vertiport. This reduces the efficiencies a single operator might have at their airport and could cause vertiports to compete, reducing economies of scale and driving up costs for consumers.

HAI understands that competition and equitable access is critical, but it is equally important to avoid impediments to the growth of the AAM industry, especially in its early stages. Public AND private infrastructure is needed for a healthy aviation system. HAI remains committed to working with legislators and community members in Oregon to proactively address concerns and answer questions regarding infrastructure and the future of AAM.

Sincerely,

Helicopter Association International