

AIR MOBILITY AND AVIATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2025 Interim

October 28, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fourth meeting of the Air Mobility and Aviation Economic Development Task Force was held on October 28, 2025, at 1:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Stephanie Dietz, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Stephanie Dietz, Co-Chair; Senator Brandon J. Storm, Co-Chair; Senators Stephen Meredith, and Matt Nunn; and Representatives John Hodgson, Michael Meredith, Rachel Roarx, and Aaron Thompson.

Guests: Auden Kaehler, Director, Advisory Services, WSP; Leif Elder, Policy Analyst, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel; Jennifer Kirchner, Executive Director, Kentuckians for Better Transportation; Sherry Kish, Advanced Mobility Advisor, HNTB; Bob Tanner, Advanced Air Mobility Director, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT); Theodore Angel, Executive Director, National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence; and Brad Schwadnt, Deputy Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Aviation (KDA), Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC).

LRC Staff: Dana Fugazzi, Austin Johnson, Ashley Nash, and Christina Williams.

Approval of the October 14, 2025, meeting minutes

Co-Chair Storm made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 14, 2025, meeting. Senator Matt Nunn seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

Alternative Aviation Fuels (AAF)

Auden Kaehler, Director, Advisory Services, WSP, briefed the task force on the AAF framework; AAF supply chain integration; AAF forecasted volumes; regional review of AAF production, including high supply costs for planned production locations to CVG airport; production opportunities in Kentucky; waterborne, rail, and policy and incentives for the use and production of AAF in Kentucky; and economic feasibility, price differential, incentives, production, and distribution investments of AAF.

In response to Representative Hodgson, Mr. Kaehler stated there is an emissions and sustainability component to the use of AAF, and a commitment to reduce the use of greenhouse gas emissions. He added the second generation of AAF may not be food-

based products, but possibly advanced waste oils, excess solar, or wind. Mr. Kaehler stated it is up for discussion who pays the price differential. Currently, the federal government is covering up to \$1.50 or more depending on the carbon intensity, which leaves a smaller amount for states to cover. In some cases, it is a negative differential.

In response to a follow-up question from Representative Hodgson, Mr. Kaehler stated there is interest in the use of AAF from European and Asian carriers, but there is also interest from American carriers as well.

In response to Chair Dietz, Mr. Kaehler stated the General Assembly, in addition to tax incentives, could help by encouraging economic development frameworks to support investments, encouraging agricultural waste or other products to come into the system through studies, and enacting policy to make it attractive for investments.

Representative Roarx commented that farmers ultimately do benefit from the use of AAF because they can produce more if given the demand for the product. She added the use of grease and waste provides an additional benefit as they would have just been considered waste otherwise. In response to Representative Roarx, Mr. Kaehler stated one of the advantages of AAF is resiliency and price stability. Representative Roarx encouraged job creation and availability where these agricultural goods are produced in Kentucky. She added there is an opportunity to have a great economic impact around the Appalachian area.

Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)

Leif Elder, Policy Analyst, Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, spoke on Utah's advanced air mobility (AAM) legislation. He highlighted key legislation passed in Utah from 2021 to 2025, including an infrastructure and regulatory study, established working groups, a 2024 appropriation request for personnel and mobile command stations, and a 2025 bill that encompassed community outreach and public education on AAM. An online local government AAM toolkit was discussed as well as additional AAM efforts.

In response to Co-Chair Storm concerning sustainable funding for AAM in Utah, Mr. Elder stated a registration fee for drones has been established at \$5.00 per vehicle. As the industry matures, he said more funding will need to be established but that funding source has not yet been identified.

Jennifer Kirchner, Executive Director, Kentuckians for Better Transportation; Sherry Kish, Advanced Mobility Advisor, HNTB; Bob Tanner, Advanced Air Mobility Director, ODOT; and Theodore Angel, Executive Director, National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence, discussed the AAM industry. Ms. Kish highlighted reasons for the use of AAM; provided an overview of air traffic management; shared ground infrastructure examples; and discussed

government roles in AAM on the federal, state, and local level. Mr. Tanner discussed Ohio's AAM focus; introducing technology at the earliest stages of construction; existing uncrewed aircraft system and AAM infrastructure; the AAM market outlook; and Ohio's AAM framework, efforts, and strategy. Mr. Angel briefed the task force on the National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence (NAAMCE); NAAMCE facilities; and national and community outreach necessary for the industry.

KYTC AAM Perspectives

Brad Schwadnt, Deputy Commissioner, KDA, KYTC, spoke on KYTC's AAM perspectives. Currently, there is no commercial AAM certified in the US, however, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is working with manufacturers and other regulatory agencies outside the US to develop standards for AAM certification and operation. The apparent front runner for US commercial certification of AAM is a Joby eVTOL, which looks similar to a large drone and is primarily designed to carry four passengers for ridesharing type commercial ventures, will most likely be certified in 2026. Mr. Schwadnt stated the KDA is a participating member of several multi-state working groups that are in discussion regarding the preparation for AAM. He outlined several challenges.

In response to Representative Hodgson, the Joby aircraft will most likely be the first to be AAM certified. It is unpredictable when it will be available in Kentucky as it depends on several factors, including production and airspace management.

In response to Chair Dietz, Mr. Schwadnt stated there is no strategic plan in place for Kentucky at this point concerning AAMs and it is not necessarily needed as examples from other states relate to the use of public use heliports. Kentucky has no public use heliports and federal law allows the landing of aircraft anywhere as long as the property owner agrees. As Kentucky has approximately 200 private use airports, Mr. Schwadnt stated there does not necessarily need to be a plan per se. Once aircrafts are certified and businesses are attracted to the area, then the decision will have to be made. KYTC will review opportunities that present themselves.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the task force, Chair Dietz adjourned the meeting at 2:48 PM.