

# **AIR MOBILITY AND AVIATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE**

## **Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2025 Interim**

**November 4, 2025**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The fifth meeting of the Air Mobility and Aviation Economic Development Task Force was held on November 4, 2025, at 3:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Brandon J. Storm, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

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

Guests: Ali Faddis, Director, Global Aviation Operations for Amazon Air; Jeff Noel, Secretary, Cabinet for Economic Development; Matthew Wingate, Chief Legal Counsel, Cabinet for Economic Development; Leslie Sizemore, PhD, Vice President, Workforce and Economic Development, Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE); Miles Feroli, PhD, Senior Associate, Workforce and Economic Development, CPE; Gayle Marks, PhD, University of Kentucky (UK), Kentucky Transportation Center; Brigadier General Brian F. Wertzler, Deputy Adjutant General, Army, Kentucky National Guard; and Colonel Gabriel D. Spicer, 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade (TAB) Commander / State Army Aviation Officer, Kentucky National Guard.

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

### **Approval of October 28, 2025, minutes**

Senator Elkins made a motion to approve the October 28, 2025, minutes. Representative Thompson seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

### **Amazon Aviation Operations in the Commonwealth**

Ali Faddis, Director, Global Aviation Operations for Amazon Air, briefed the task force on Amazon Air aviation operations in the Commonwealth. Ms. Faddis touched on the significant Amazon presence across Kentucky highlighting facilities in Campbellsville, the CVG air hub in Boone County, 12 fulfillment facilities, and seven delivery stations. Amazon has invested more than \$60 billion in Kentucky since 2010, and more than 20,000 full- and part-time jobs have been created in Kentucky. The Amazon air cargo network is designed to serve Amazon customers, enable faster delivery, and provide a wider selection of products.

Ms. Faddis highlighted the CVG Amazon Air Hub, a \$1.5 billion investment that was launched in 2021. The hub is Amazon's largest field operation and includes 600 acres, an 800,000 square foot sortation building, robotics sortation technology, over 2,000 associates, and more than 30 daily flights. Ms. Faddis also touched on alternative aviation fuel and Amazon's Career Choice Program.

Chair Storm expressed appreciation for the investment Amazon Air has poured into Kentucky. In response to Chair Storm, Ms. Faddis stated she would follow-up on the most in demand workforce need for Amazon, both in Kentucky and nationwide. She also stated autonomous vehicles are being tested for use on the ramps at the CVG Amazon Hub.

### **Aviation Economic Development Plan**

Jeff Noel, Secretary, Cabinet for Economic Development, discussed aviation as a key driver of economic growth. Aviation attracts new businesses to the Commonwealth, supports business retention and expansion, provides employment and workforce development opportunities, increases global reach of Kentucky businesses, and supports tourism and talent attraction. Secretary Noel stated Kentucky is number one in air cargo transported by weight, and in aerospace related exports. More than 100 aerospace and defense companies employ over 23,000 people in Kentucky. In addition, Kentucky has \$18.9 billion in exports of aerospace products, as well as three major air cargo hubs in Kentucky.

Secretary Noel highlighted investment in airports and airport infrastructure, and aviation marketing. He also touched on the Eastern Kentucky University and Madisonville Community College aviation programs.

In response to Co-Chair Dietz, Secretary Noel stated he believes the Cabinet for Economic Development works well with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) and that the two cabinets have the same vision. However, they do not actively review each other's strategic plans. He acknowledged that should probably occur. They do have meetings with KYTC officials and they have been engaged in some risk share agreements, but more could be done.

In response to Chair Storm, Secretary Noel stated CVG airport is one of the few airports of its size with the kinds of operations it has that still has land available for future development, which resonates with any commercial aviation enterprise. Also, as an attraction for aviation businesses, several supply chain companies are located in Kentucky as well as aviation educational opportunities. Kentucky being the number one state for air cargo with successful companies such as UPS, DHL, and Amazon, makes it a prime spot for the location of aviation businesses.

In response to Chair Storm, Secretary Noel stated he believes there will be more youth that want to break into the aviation industry. There are great programs in place to do that as UPS, DHL, and Amazon all have programs to reach the middle and high school levels. These types of programs need to continue to be supported as youth outreach is crucial to the growth of the industry.

### **Air Traffic Control Study**

Leslie Sizemore, PhD, Vice President, Workforce and Economic Development, CPE, and Miles Feroli, PhD, Senior Associate, Workforce and Economic Development, CPE, discussed 2025 RS SB 87. SB 87 directed the CPE, in coordination with KYTC, to conduct a study to identify the procedures and resources necessary to establish a program at one or more public postsecondary institutions that leads to a credential recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for employment within the field of air traffic control or traffic safety. By December 1, 2025, CPE must submit the report to the Legislative Research Commission and notify the president and governing board of any institution identified. By June 30, 2026, CPE will approve a program as a result.

In response to Co-Chair Dietz, Dr. Feroli stated the simulators cost from \$80,000 to approximately \$300,000. In response to a follow-up question, Gayle Marks, PhD, UK, Kentucky Transportation Center, stated the FAA requires each postsecondary institution to have their own equipment and technology. She elaborated that the use of used technology from a facility would have to be discussed with the FAA. Dr. Feroli stated the AERO Act will hopefully facilitate some private-public partnerships with industry partners to provide a significant amount of cost reduction in equipment.

Representative Roarx expressed her appreciation for the aviation opportunities provided in Kentucky, including air traffic control education and workforce opportunities.

In response to Chair Storm, Dr. Feroli elaborated on air traffic collegiate training incentives (AT-CTI) eligibility requirements.

### **Army National Guard Aviation Operations**

Brigadier General Brian F. Wertzler, Deputy Adjutant General, Army, Kentucky National Guard; and Colonel Gabriel D. Spicer, 63rd TAB Commander/State Army Aviation Officer, Kentucky National Guard, briefed the task force on the 63rd TAB, their mission, the force structure and resources, and their economic impact. The TAB has over 500 guardsman drilling monthly with 76 full-time employees in Frankfort, 13 Blackhawk helicopters, eight UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, and a C12 Huron. Colonel Spicer also briefed the task force on their airline pilots, civilian medevacs, aircraft mechanics, and federal budget.

In response to Chair Storm, General Wertzler stated he appreciates all the benefits and

incentives that the Kentucky General Assembly provides them.

In response to Senator Elkins, General Wertzler stated recruiting and retention is the biggest challenge they face in continuing successful operations.

**Remarks from Representative Roarx**

Representative Roarx attended a National Lieutenant Governor's Association's subcommittee centered around aerospace, aviation, and air mobility. She briefed the task force on her findings from that meeting.

**Discussion of Task Force Report**

Chair Storm requested that any recommendations members or stakeholders would like included in the task force report be sent to him and Co-Chair Dietz.

**Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the task force, Chair Storm adjourned the meeting at 4:30 PM.