

By: Cook

H.B. No. 2678

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to advanced air mobility technology.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 21, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 21.0045 to read as follows:

Sec. 21.0045. ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

(a) In this section, "advanced air mobility" has the meaning assigned by Section 21.072.

(b) The commission shall appoint an advisory committee to:

(1) assess current state law and any potential changes to state law that are needed to facilitate the implementation of advanced air mobility technology in this state; and

(2) develop a statewide plan, including a proposed timeline, for the implementation of advanced air mobility technology in this state.

(c) The commission shall appoint to the advisory committee members to represent:

(1) diverse geographic regions of the state;

(2) state and local law enforcement;

(3) the advanced air mobility industry;

(4) transportation experts;

(5) commercial airport representatives;

(6) vertiport operators;

(7) local governments; and

1 (8) the general public.

2 (d) The advisory committee shall:

3 (1) hold public hearings in locations across the state
4 or via electronic means; and

5 (2) receive comments through an Internet website, by
6 mail, and by other methods, if appropriate.

7 (e) Not later than September 1, 2024, the advisory committee
8 shall submit to the commission and the legislature a written report
9 that includes:

10 (1) the committee's findings and recommendations on
11 any changes to state law that are needed to facilitate the
12 implementation of advanced air mobility technology in this state;
13 and

14 (2) the statewide plan developed under Subsection
15 (b)(2).

16 (f) The advisory committee is abolished and this section
17 expires January 1, 2025.

18 SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Transportation Code,
19 is amended by adding Section 21.072 to read as follows:

20 Sec. 21.072. ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY. (a) In this section,
21 "advanced air mobility" means an aviation transportation system
22 that uses highly automated aircraft, which may be manned or
23 unmanned, to operate and transport passengers or cargo at lower
24 altitudes for commercial, public service, private, or recreational
25 purposes.

26 (b) The department shall:

27 (1) review existing state aviation standards and

1 guidelines, airport facility planning, and compatibility guidance
2 to ensure that the standards, guidelines, planning, and guidance
3 are applicable to advanced air mobility;

4 (2) support the development of federal and industry
5 standards for advanced air mobility technology that prioritize
6 safety as the technology develops;

7 (3) designate a department employee as a liaison to
8 the Federal Aviation Administration for purposes of Subdivision
9 (2);

10 (4) develop a statewide plan, or an update to the Texas
11 Airport System Plan, that specifies potential locations for and
12 classifications of vertiports and other associated infrastructure
13 to guide the future operational environment of advanced air
14 mobility; and

15 (5) provide resources and assistance on the use of
16 advanced air mobility technology and infrastructure to local
17 governments, regional councils of government, transportation
18 planning organizations, the advanced air mobility industry, and
19 other entities for the purpose of identifying governmental methods
20 to integrate industry innovation and community vision and help
21 promote advanced air mobility technology.

22 (c) The department, Texas Education Agency, and Texas
23 Higher Education Coordinating Board shall jointly collaborate with
24 school districts, institutions of higher education, and interested
25 public and private stakeholders on educational opportunities
26 related to advanced air mobility technology.

27 SECTION 3. The Texas Department of Transportation, Texas

1 Education Agency, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board are
2 required to implement Section 21.072, Transportation Code, as added
3 by this Act, only if the legislature appropriates money
4 specifically for that purpose. If the legislature does not
5 appropriate money specifically for that purpose, the Texas
6 Department of Transportation, Texas Education Agency, and Texas
7 Higher Education Coordinating Board may, but are not required to,
8 implement Section 21.072, Transportation Code, using other
9 appropriations available for that purpose.

10 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.