

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Transportation
For HB 2678

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Hearing Date: April 5, 2023 10:30 AM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Brian Freedman, President
Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership
Houston, TX

I am writing today in support of HB 2678.

Advanced air mobility (AAM) is a new, innovative mode of transportation that will streamline and modernize the future of mobility for passengers and cargo by relying on underutilized aerial transit routes. AAM will reduce the current burden on infrastructure, decrease traffic congestion, and lower harmful emissions.

The AAM industry will involve partnering with federal, state, and local governments to effectively incorporate AAM solutions into current transportation networks. Texas is expected to be an early test location for AAM as soon as 2025, as well as a hub for commercial operations and investment. Last session (87R), SB 763, was passed which created the Urban Air Mobility (UAM) advisory committee within TxDOT on this new industry to assess the current state law and any potential changes that are needed to facilitate the development of UAM operations and infrastructure in this state.

AAM will be a growing industry in Texas and HB 2678 is an important step in being prepared for that growth and the opportunity that it will present the State of Texas.

Kevin Cox, CEO
Ferrovial Vertiports
Irving, TX

On behalf of the undersigned leaders in Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), thank you for your consideration of HB 2678. We represent the majority of aircraft manufacturers currently undergoing safety certification and leading pilot training, aircraft and infrastructure operators. While we differ on aircraft design, country of origin, commercial strategy and timeline, we share an interest in bringing the benefits of high-speed, zero-emission aircraft to Texas within this decade. We wholeheartedly support the enactment and implementation of HB 2678.

Advanced Air Mobility holds tremendous promise for the people, economy, and environment of Texas. AAM is a revolutionary modality to move people and goods in, around, and between communities and industrial locations. The AAM industry has the potential to add 234,000 jobs and \$115 billion annually to the U.S. economy by 2035. Over the last ten years, an enormous amount of private capital has been invested in the AAM industry to develop technologies with significant societal benefit; in 2021 and 2022 alone, the AAM industry raised nearly \$10 billion in investments. These investments are funding the transformational aircraft, innovative operations, cutting-edge workforce training programs, and safe infrastructure that will make AAM a reality in the coming years.

HB 2678 is bipartisan legislation that builds on the work that Texas has done to prepare for advanced air mobility. It establishes a forum for stakeholder engagement, develops capacity at state agencies, strengthens the workforce, and keeps Texas competitive in this global marketplace.

As important as what this legislation includes, it is also meaningful to acknowledge what it does not do. HB 2678 does not make heavy-handed attempts to prejudge or preclude how AAM will serve the people and economy of Texas. Nor does it saddle this emerging industry with aspirational mandates. Lastly, it does not crowd out private investment with tax dollars.

HB 2678 is helpful legislation that is targeted at adding capacity and resources to State activities that will support AAM integration through collaborative engagement with all necessary stakeholders. These policies will keep Texas competitive in the global marketplace. Please support HB 2678 to improve the economy, mobility and quality of life for Texans.

Bristow Group, CAE, Eve Aviation, Ferrovial Vertiports, HAI, Joby, Lilium, Overair, Skyports, Vertical

Katia Veraza

Helicopter Association International

Helotes, TX

As representatives of the international flight industry, the Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to support House Bill 2678 – relating to advanced air mobility technology. HAI represents more than 100 companies and over 3,800 industry professionals in the state of Texas alone. HAI’s members operate the full scope of vertical aviation aircraft, both crewed and uncrewed. 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 our industry’s most pressing AAM challenges.

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. Texas’s favorable business climate, proactive transportation policies and innovative local governments make it a key state for the AAM industry. Assessing changes in current state laws that are needed to facilitate the implementation of AAM and developing a statewide plan for the implementation of AAM technology in Texas, are two key goals of the AAM industry.

The geographic size of Texas and the distance between population centers make air travel in the state a necessity. In addition to serving business and recreational needs, AAM offers many new opportunities for the development and diversification of the Texas economy. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the aerospace and aviation industry directly employ over 148,000 Texas workers at more than 1,400 establishments and ranks number one in the U.S. for air transportation employment, building on a rich history of industry innovation and development in the state.

AAM, including its submarkets of urban air mobility (UAM) and regional air mobility (RAM), will safely and efficiently move people and cargo between places currently not served or underserved by aviation and will complement existing surface-based alternatives. Importantly, these aircraft have the potential to be quiet, safe, more sustainable, and more affordable, providing societal, environmental, and economic benefits to communities across the state of Texas.

HAI is pleased to see the introduction of HB 2678, and we look forward to its passage. Our association remains committed to working with legislators and community members in Texas to proactively address the safe and efficient introduction of AAM into the state market.

Sincerely,

Katia Veraza, Manager of Government Affairs – HAI