**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**
**Senator Dave Cortese, Chair**
**2025 - 2026 Regular**

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| **Bill No:** | AB 431 | **Hearing Date:** | 6/9/2026 |
| **Author:** | Wilson | | |
| **Version:** | 5/27/2026 Amended | | |
| **Urgency:** | No | **Fiscal:** | Yes |
| **Consultant:** | Samuel Myers | | |

**SUBJECT:** Advanced Air Mobility Infrastructure Act

**DIGEST:** This bill requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in coordination with other state agencies, to establish a working group related to the implementation of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) technology in California.

**ANALYSIS:**

*Existing federal law:*

1) Authorizes the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to develop plans and policy for airspace use, assign airspace use, and prescribe air traffic regulations. (49 USC 40103)

*Existing state law:*

1) Establishes the State Aeronautics Act with the purposes of, among other things, encouraging the development of private flying and general use of air transportation, fostering and promoting safety in aeronautics, effecting uniformity of laws and regulations consistent with federal laws and regulations, providing for cooperation with federal authorities, and protecting people living in proximity of airports from noise. (PUC 21001, 21002)

2) Defines "aeronautics" as the science and art of flight, including transportation by aircraft; the operation, construction, repair, or maintenance of aircraft and aircraft power plants and accessories; or the design, establishment, construction, extension, operation, improvement, repair, or maintenance of airports or other air navigation facilities. (PUC 21011)

3) Grants the state power to regulate the intrastate rates of common carriers by air, but otherwise recognizes the authority of the federal government to regulate the

operation of aircraft and to control the use of the airways. (PUC 21240)

4) Requires Caltrans to encourage, foster, and assist in the development of aeronautics in the state and encourage the establishment of airports and air navigation facilities. (PUC 21241)

5) Authorizes Caltrans to draft and recommend necessary legislation to advance the interest of the state in aeronautics and to make and amend general or special rules, regulation, and procedures and establish minimum standards for aeronautics. (PUC 21242, 21243)

**This bill:**

1) Includes findings and declarations supporting the goals of the bill.

2) Declares the provisions may be cited as the "Advanced Air Mobility Infrastructure Act."

3) Defines "eCTOL" to mean an electric conventional takeoff and landing aircraft.

4) Defines "eVTOL" to mean an electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft.

5) Defines "advanced air mobility" to mean an air transportation system primarily using electric aircraft, including eVTOL and eCTOL aircraft, to carry passengers, cargo, or provide services in an urban or regional setting, with a gross takeoff weight of 300 pounds or more.

6) Defines "powered-lift aircraft" to mean a heavier-than-air aircraft capable of vertical takeoff, vertical landing, and low speed flight that depends principally on engine-driven lift devices or engine thrust for lift during these flight regimes and on nonrotating airfoil(s) for lift during horizontal flight.

7) Defines "vertiport" to mean an area of land, water, or a structure used or intended to be used for the landing or takeoff of powered-lift aircraft and includes associated buildings and facilities.

8) Specifies the provisions of this bill only apply to electric aircraft, including eVTOL and eCTOL aircraft, and powered-lift aircraft that satisfy either of the following criteria:

a) Have a gross takeoff weight of 300 pounds or more; and,

b) Are capable of carrying humans or an equivalent amount of cargo.

9) Requires Caltrans, in coordination with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), to include AAM in the next update to the California Transportation Plan after January 1, 2027.

10) Requires Caltrans to establish a statewide working group to facilitate broad stakeholder engagement to explore California's role in the development and implementation of AAM technology. Requires this to be done in coordination with CalSTA, the California Energy Commission (CEC), the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), and the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI).

11) Stipulates the bill shall not interfere with or suspend either of the following:

a) The authority of FAA, or any other federal department or agency, as specified.

b) State zoning laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, zoning laws or regulations related to land use, development, or the construction of facilities within the jurisdiction of the local zoning authority.

12) Clarifies the bill shall not limit or interfere with the jurisdiction, authority, rights, or responsibilities of any airport sponsor or airport operator with respect to the operation, maintenance, management, or capital development of any airport within the state.

**COMMENTS:**

1) *Purpose of the bill.* According to the author, "Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) is a new and innovative mode of transportation that will modernize the future of mobility for passengers and cargo by relying on underutilized aerial transit routes. Referred to by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a "new era of aviation," AAM utilizes a new type of aircraft known as electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL). eVTOL aircraft have a variety of applications, including the transport of people, cargo, and medical services. While AAM represents a step toward the future, there currently are no guiding principles on the implementation or rollout of AAM across California. AB 431 aims to establish those guiding principles, setting California up for success in the future.

Currently, there is no set of clear, comprehensive, and concrete steps for the deployment and scaling of AAM in California. Although the FAA has the overarching authority over all airspace in the U.S., the California state government will have a key role in guiding local municipalities, raising public awareness, and integrating necessary infrastructure. AB 431 aims to build off of SB 800, which required the Department of Transportation to create an advisory panel and publish an infrastructure feasibility and readiness study on AAM."

2) *What is AAM?* AAM is a generalized term that can refer to a range of different technologies. Usually, the term is understood to encompass new types of aircraft designs, new air transportation modes, zero-emission aircraft technology, and autonomous aircraft technology. Specifically, AAM services tend to be focused on aviation that can accommodate urban, suburban, and rural flights up to several hundred miles. Proposed AAM operations will serve passengers, logistics and goods delivery, aeromedical transportation and treatment, emergency response, disaster relief operations, and other professional and industrial activities. Overall, AAM incorporates several converging innovations, such as vertical takeoff/landing, electrification, automation, and the growth of app-based on-demand mobility services.

   The term AAM also encompasses multiple related terms such as Urban Air Mobility (UAM) and Regional Air Mobility (RAM). UAM usually refers to local trips up to 50 miles in length, while RAM refers to wider regional connectivity up to several hundred miles. In general, these types of AAM are focused on first and last mile connections as part of interregional, continental, or trans-oceanic flight itineraries.

   Another area of focus within AAM is electric aircraft, powered either by battery packs or hydrogen fuel cells. These can take two different forms. The first are eCTOL (electric conventional take-off and landing). As traditional aircraft powered entirely by electric motors, eCTOLs require runways for takeoff and landing. The second form are eVTOL (electric vertical take-off and landing) which have the ability to land and take off vertically, just like conventional helicopters, making them a suitable vehicle for urban environments with little room to maneuver. eVTOLs also sport a diversity of designs, with fixed and rotary wing models.

   Unlike eCTOLs, eVTOLs would have the ability to operate out of vertiports. These are dedicated facilities, much like heliports, that serve as stations and charging hubs for eVTOLs. Vertiports would be located at key transportation hubs, points of origin, or destinations of interest to easily integrate AAM into a broader transportation network.

Manufacturers, technology companies, and transportation providers envision the use of electric aircraft overall, but eVTOLs specifically, to provide cost-effective intra-city, inter-city, and regional air travel in the nation's most congested areas. There is significant global activity with numerous different prototype aircraft under development, with many companies already conducting test flights.

Finally, many companies are working on autonomous flight technology, with the goal of implementing on-demand, UAM robo-air taxi service akin to Uber or Waymo, using highly or fully autonomous vehicles.

3) *AAM Federally*. FAA is responsible for regulating aircraft, airports, and air traffic, including managing the National Airspace System (NAS). FAA also plays a role in encouraging and developing new aviation technology. FAA is working on integrating AAM into the NAS. To that end, FAA released a final rule for powered-lift pilot certification and operations in October 2024. Specifically, the rule outlined pilot and instructor certification requirements as well as operational rules. The operational rules are performance-based so that the appropriate regulation applies to the aircraft in the powered-lift category depending on its flight characteristics.

   FAA is also working on aircraft certification and operator certification, infrastructure development, community engagement, and implementation plans for AAM operations. In fact, FAA released an implementation plan providing the steps they and others will need to take to safely enable AAM operations in the near term. According to FAA, the so-called "Innovate28 (I28) is an FAA initiative that will culminate in integrated AAM operations with original equipment manufacturers and/or operators flying between multiple origins and destinations at one or more locations in the U.S. by 2028."

   More recently, in April 2025, the federal government also launched the eVTOL Integration Pilot Program (eIPP). The program came in response to an executive order titled *Unleashing American Drone Dominance* focused on drone and other autonomous aviation technology. eIPP is three-year pilot project for the development of airspace corridors and operations in the AAM space. 50 applicants across the nation applied, including California with Caltrans in conjunction with local governments and manufacturers. Project selections were announced in March 2026. Although Caltrans was not selected, eight projects across 26 states were awarded that collectively cover AAM implementations such as urban air taxis, emergency medical response, and autonomous flight, among others.

4) *AAM in California.* Many companies developing AAM are based in California, such as Archer Aviation, Joby, Wisk, Overair, and Kittyhawk. Although each company has a slightly different focus, they all generally aim to establish some form of air taxi service here in the state. For example, Joby is targeting eVTOL service, initially focused on bringing passengers from smaller, regional airports to major airports throughout California. As part of this effort, they are working towards having initial passenger service available in time for the 2028 Olympics. Wisk, which is a partnership between Boeing and Google, is following a similar track. They are currently testing a four-passenger eVOTL vehicle with a 90-mile range. However, unlike Joby, Wisk plans to start passenger operations with a fully autonomous vehicle.

   Regardless of operational model, AAM is projected to have a major effect on California's economy moving forward. For instance, a 2023 report from California State University Long Beach found that a six vertiport network in the Los Angeles-Orange County region could generate 2,133 jobs during construction and 943 jobs annually once operational. The study projects the vertiport network would annually generate $173.3 million in expenditures and deliver $90.3 million in labor income.

   Additionally, AAM manufacturers Pyka and Joby were highlighted in Governor Newsom's February 2025 economic blueprint. The report notes that Pyka, an autonomous electric aircraft manufacturer based in Alameda, plans to invest more than $9 million to expand operations, creating over 130 new jobs, and Joby plans to invest more than $40 million to expand operations in Santa Cruz and Marina, creating over 700 new jobs.

   Due to this impact, California has already started taking steps towards supporting the AAM industry. For example, in 2023, GO-Biz awarded Joby a $9.8 million California Competes grant to support statewide expansions. Namely, the grant aimed to support the expansion of Joby's manufacturing facilities in the state and to support further job creation at their existing offices in California. Similarly, in 2025 the California Jobs First Council, an initiative led by the Governor's Regional Investment Imitative, awarded a $7.5 million grant to the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership to develop AAM flight corridors in the Central Coast.

   Legislatively, in 2024 the Legislature passed, and Governor Newsom signed into law, SB 800 (Caballero, Chapter 416, Statutes of 2024), which required Caltrans to establish the Advance Air Mobility and Aviation Electrification Advisory Panel (Advisor Panel), to assess infrastructure readiness, prepare a three-year workplan, and assess pathways to equity of access for AAM.

Specifically, the Advisory Panel was required to assess (1) the feasibility and readiness of existing infrastructure in the state to support a vertiport network to facilitate the development of AAM services; (2) the development of a three-year prioritized workplan that maps out medium-term state activities necessary for the state to advance AAM services for Californians; and (3) pathways for promoting equity of access to advanced air mobility infrastructure to ensure open access and prohibit the monopolization of advanced air mobility infrastructure ownership and operations.

The Advisory Panel consisted of representatives from CARB, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the general aviation industry, commercial airports, local governments, and the AAM industry. Caltrans was required to issue a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2025, on the infrastructure feasibility and the three-year workplan. A draft version of that report was released in December 2025.

5) *AAM and Caltrans*. While FAA has jurisdiction over NAS, Caltrans' Division of Aeronautics is responsible for promoting aviation safety and ensuring the efficient operation of California's airports. They oversee airport permitting, conduct safety and compliance inspections, and provide guidance on aviation-related matters, including AAM. Additionally, they manage the California Aid to Airports Program (CAAP) and facilitate the delivery of capital projects related to aviation. The division also develops the California Aviation System Plan (CASP), which includes a 10-year capital improvement program which is submitted to the California Transportation Commission. CASP is intended to better align aviation planning from the perspectives of both FAA and Caltrans to demonstrate how aviation is an integral part of California's multimodal transportation system.

   The CASP 2020 considers aviation's capabilities and specifies airport roles and needs. According to Caltrans, "CASP 2020 comprehensively views California public-use airports to evaluate aviation and contribute to the California Transportation Plan of 2050 (CTP 2050). CTP 2050 is the state's long-range transportation plan that establishes an aspirational vision that articulates strategic goals, policies, and recommendations to improve multimodal mobility and accessibility while reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions."

   CASP 2020 included AAM, noting, "Several manufacturers of electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (e-VTOL) have completed prototype aircraft to transport passengers within and between large metropolitan areas. The aircraft could operate in a range of altitudes from 500 to 5,000 feet, rely on battery power to reduce GHG emissions, and are expected to operate more quietly than rotor

aircraft. Areas targeted for the initial implementation of on-demand e-VTOL travel include the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles metropolitan area."

Additionally, Caltrans found that financial and business opportunities exist, but there are significant technological, operational, and regulatory challenges including issues involving public perception and acceptance. Specifically, CASP 2020 found that "despite the strides made by aircraft manufactures to develop viable aircraft, AAM challenges remain as neither the physical infrastructure (e.g., takeoff and landing infrastructure, power infrastructure, etc.) nor the regulatory and policy framework have been developed to address UAM [now AAM] operation in urban areas."

6) *AAM in other states*. As of 2025, fourteen other states had passed some form of AAM legislation, including study bills such as in Georgia, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Washington, with scopes ranging from vertiport development to analyzing the AAM industry as a whole. Legislation in other states has authorized or established specific funding sources, such as in Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, and Michigan. Finally, some states have also legislated definitions, limitations, and regulations of vertiports, including Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, and West Virginia. Among these states, many have also prohibited local governments from granting exclusive rights to vertiports to a single operator. In all cases this type of restriction has been opposed by the AAM manufacturers.

   Utah in particular has been very active in the AAM space. Last year, Utah completed a study of their AAM infrastructure and recommended revisions to state law to support AAM. The Utah report included a number of recommended actions for their Legislature to consider including, further defining terms for AAM; better defining roles of government and three-dimensional property rights, including enacting formal processes for licensing vertiports; and enacting municipal permitting and zoning changes.

7) *Next steps for AAM in California.* In December 2025 Caltrans released the draft version of the report mandated by SB 800. *The Advanced Air Mobility: Infrastructure Readiness and Three-Year Implementation Work Plan* provided an analysis of AAM readiness in California and provided a number of recommendations for advancing AAM in California. These included:

   - Review the State Aeronautics Act.

   - Review Caltrans' role in vertiport siting and permitting.

- Identify opportunities to increase funding for the state's general aviation airports.

- Identify funding opportunities for AAM-related infrastructure and business development.

- Identify energy and infrastructure needs.

- Provide supplemental environmental guidance for reviewing AAM-related projects prior to decision making.

- Review and amend the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook to address AAM.

- Include AAM in the California Transportation Plan (CTP).

- Create a public education and outreach framework for local agencies to learn about AAM.

- Distribute best practices to assist local agencies with community and public outreach.

- Establish best practices for AAM planning and evaluation at the local level.

- Facilitate ongoing collaboration among agency and industry stakeholders.

AB 431 seeks to take the first step towards implementing the recommendations included in this report. Specifically, AB 431 implements two of these recommendations: (1) Include AAM in the California Transportation Plan, and (2) Facilitate ongoing collaboration among agency and industry stakeholders. The first of these can be done directly by Caltrans and CalSTA. However, as the CTP is done every five years, and one is expected at the end of this year, this requirement will not take affect until the 2031 CTP. The second recommendation will be implemented by forming a working group comprised of Caltrans, CalSTA, CEC, CARB, GO-Biz, LCI. The goal of this working group will be to facilitate further cooperation between state agencies, local offices of emergency management, and industry stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of further advancing AAM development in California.

While AB 431 does not address all of the issues raised by the Caltrans AAM report, it is an important next step in preparing California for the burgeoning AAM industry.

According to Wisk Aero, writing as the sponsor, "AB 431 requires the Department of Transportation to include AAM in the next update to the California Transportation Plan and to establish a working group to explore the development and implementation of AAM, supporting technology, and economic development. By providing a comprehensive and strategic plan for the deployment of this technology, AB 431 (Wilson) will ensure that the State reaps the benefits of this California-grown technology."

**RELATED/PREVIOUS LEGISLATION:**

**SB 800 (Caballero, Chapter 416, Statutes of 2024)** – Required Caltrans to establish the Advanced Air Mobility, Zero-Emission, and Electrification Aviation Advisory Panel to assess the feasibility and readiness of existing infrastructure, while developing an implementation plan for AAM. Required the department to provide a report to the legislature no later than Jan 1, 2025.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

**POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, June 3, 2026.)**

**SUPPORT:**

Aerospace and Defense Alliance of California
Airlines for America (A4A)
Association of California Airports
California Airports Council
California Chamber of Commerce
California Manufacturers and Technology Association
County of Ventura
Joby Aero Inc.
Monterey Bay Economic Partnership
Wisk

**OPPOSITION:**

None received

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