

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 431
Author: Wilson (D), et al.
Amended: 5/27/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 13-0, 6/9/26

AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Dahle, Gonzalez, Grayson, Menjivar, Richardson, Seyarto, Valladares, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/2/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Advanced Air Mobility Infrastructure Act

SOURCE: Author

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 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. (Public Utilities Code (PUC) § 21001, 21002)

- 2) 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)
- 3) 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, regulations, and procedures and establish minimum standards for aeronautics. (PUC §§21242, 21243)

This bill:

- 1) Specifies the provisions of this bill only apply to electric aircraft, including electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) and electric conventional takeoff and landing (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.
- 2) Requires Caltrans, in coordination with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), to include AAM in the next update to the California Transportation Plan (CTP) after January 1, 2027.
- 3) 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).
- 4) Stipulates this bill shall not interfere with or suspend either of the following:
 - a) The authority of the Federal Aviation Administration (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.

- 5) Clarifies this 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) *AAM in California.* 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.

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.

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 Initiative, 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 (Advisory 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.

- 3) *AAM and Caltrans*. While FAA has jurisdiction over the National Airspace System, 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. The division also develops the California Aviation System Plan (CASP), which 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.

CASP 2020 considers aviation's capabilities and specifies airport roles and needs. Notably, CASP 2020 also includes an analysis of AAM, finding that financial and business opportunities exist, but that significant technological, operational, and regulatory challenges exist. These primarily include issues involving public perception and acceptance.

- 4) *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.

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 CTP, and (2) Facilitate ongoing collaboration among agency and industry stakeholders. The first of these can be done directly by Caltrans and CalSTA. However, as CTP is done every five years, and one is expected at the end of this year, this requirement will not take effect until the 2031 CTP. The second recommendation will be implemented by forming a working group comprised of Caltrans, CalSTA, CEC, CARB,

GO-Biz, and 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.

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

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- Caltrans estimates ongoing costs of approximately \$215,000 annually for 1.0 PY of staff workload to meet the requirements of this bill, including establishing an expanded statewide working group, collaborating with and facilitating communication among participating entities, researching ongoing developments in the evolving AAM sector, and developing expanded AAM information for inclusion in the CTP. (Aeronautics Account)
- Staff estimates that CalSTA, CEC, CARB, GO-Biz, and LCI would each incur minor to moderate ongoing costs to participate in activities related to the statewide working group. For example, LCI reports ongoing annual costs of approximately \$61,500 (General Fund) for a partial PY of staff time to support the work needed to participate in the statewide working group. Staff assumes a similar level of workload for each of the other participating entities, resulting in total costs in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars in the aggregate. (General Fund, various special funds)

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/13/26)

Aerospace and Defense Alliance of California
 Airlines for America
 Archer Aviation
 Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International
 Association of California Airports
 California Airports Council
 California Chamber of Commerce
 California Manufacturers and Technology Association
 City of Long Beach
 County of Monterey
 County of Ventura
 Joby Aero INC
 Joby Aviation
 Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
 Long Beach; City of

Monterey Bay Economic Partnership
University of California
Valley Industry and Commerce Association
Vertiports Aviation Atlantic
Wisk

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/13/26)

City of Newport Beach

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/2/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Fariás, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

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