

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
Ed Bolen, President & CEO
National Business Aviation Association**

SUBMITTED TO THE

**House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Aviation**

Hearing:

“Preparing for Take-Off: Examining Efforts to Address Climate Change at U.S. Airports”

May 17, 2022

Chairman Larsen, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Subcommittee on Aviation thank you for holding this hearing to address and build upon the impressive sustainability efforts underway at our nation's airports. On behalf of the National Business Aviation Association's (NBAA's) 11,000-member companies, we are pleased to provide this statement for the record.

NBAA's members, many of which are small businesses, rely on business aircraft to meet some portion of their transportation challenges. Business aircraft provide connectivity to communities in nearly every Congressional district, many of which are not served by commercial airlines. While the airlines serve only around 500 airports, business aviation can reach 5,000. The general aviation industry supports 1.2 million American jobs and \$247 billion in economic output.

Through the Business Aviation Commitment on Climate Change, our industry has pledged to achieve net-zero CO2 emissions by 2050. This goal builds on our proven track record of leading the way on fuel-saving technologies from winglets to highly efficient engine technology and advanced avionics. To achieve our 2050 goal, business aviation is making significant investments in zero-emission electric aviation, sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), optimizing GPS technology to fly the most direct and efficient routes and utilizing sustainable infrastructure at airports. These initiatives will lead to a sustainable future for business aviation while maintaining the jobs our industry provides to American workers.

Through programs such as NBAA's Sustainable Flight Department Accreditation Program, which has a specific focus on infrastructure and ground support equipment, business aviation is taking measurable steps to address climate change at U.S. airports. This comprehensive accreditation program will stimulate, document, and audit how operators are making widespread investments and progress towards a carbon-neutral future. For airport operations, participants will work towards measurable reductions in CO2 emissions through the modernization of hangars and other facilities, concentrating on reduced electric and water consumption. In addition, the program focuses on ground vehicles that support business aviation, such as aircraft tugs. To achieve the CO2 reduction goals through the accreditation, operators will make investments in electric-powered ground support vehicles or utilize more sustainable fuel sources.

Expanding SAF Availability and Utilization

As a drop-in fuel, SAF is a low carbon synthetic jet fuel derived from sustainable feedstocks, which is available now but not at the levels to meet demand. With SAF able to reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80% compared to conventional jet fuel, significantly scaling up production is critical to achieving emissions reduction goals under programs like NBAA's Sustainable Flight Department Accreditation.

NBAA and our coalition partners in the *Business Aviation Coalition for Sustainable Aviation Fuel*, continue to educate the airport and operator community about the benefits of SAF, which has led to broad acceptance and demand for the fuel. For example, NetJets, one of the largest operators of business aircraft, has committed to purchasing 100 million gallons of SAF over the next ten years. Signature Flight Support, the world's largest chain of Fixed Based Operators, has SAF available at a growing list of general aviation airports and has supplied more than 6 million gallons of renewable fuel since 2020.

While these are impressive accomplishments, the SAF market is still in a nascent stage and requires a long-term, technology- and feedstock-neutral tax incentive to meet growing demand. We appreciate the Subcommittee's leadership in supporting H.R. 3440, the Sustainable Skies Act, and want to underscore that a blender's tax credit specifically aimed at incentivizing the production of SAF is the most important action that Congress can take to support decarbonization of the aviation sector. The Administration's Aviation Climate Action Plan and SAF Grand Challenge also recognize the need to rapidly scale the SAF industry this decade. Policies like the blender's tax credit are crucial to achieving the Administration's goal of 3 billion gallons of SAF by 2030 and 100% SAF by 2050, representing an estimated 35 billion gallons. With aviation being one of the most challenging transportation sectors to decarbonize, building a thriving domestic SAF industry is crucial to our energy security and will put airports and operators on a path to achieving their shared sustainability goals.

Investing in Sustainability at General Aviation Airports

Across our nation's diverse system of general aviation airports, business aircraft operators and airport management are investing in a more sustainable future. For NBAA members participating in our Sustainable Flight Department Accreditation program, investments in emerging technologies, alternative fuels, building efficiency and resiliency, and employee training are underway to reduce CO2 emissions at their airport facilities. Beyond the 10% CO2 reduction over their baseline accreditation year, on a path to net-zero carbon emissions by 2040, program participants will need to provide information in a sustainability strategy document addressing their short and long-term goals.

This strategy is leading to significant investments at airports. For example, a leading air charter operator in California has completed the installation of a 500-kilowatt solar array covering approximately 30,000 square feet of roof space. This project will offset the equivalent of 530 metric tons of CO2. Also, in California, a well-respected flight department is committed to being net-zero emissions as a company by the end of 2022 and carbon neutral by the end of this year 2021. To help achieve these goals, the company will also utilize all-electric vehicles and aircraft ground power units.

In addition to its leadership on SAF, Signature Flight Support recently completed its 29th LEED certified construction project at the Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. The company is pivoting to the use of biodiesel to power its vehicles and increasing its electric-powered ground service equipment across its fleet. Independent FBOs, such as Gary Jet Center in Chicago, are also committed to sustainability by constructing a new facility to LEED standards.

As sustainable technologies for airports and ground support equipment advance, the business aviation community is committed to being a leader and early adopter. Our broad industry goal for net-zero emissions by 2050 and more detailed goals for Sustainable Flight Department Accreditation participants provide a measurable framework for emissions reductions. Our airport partners are a crucial part of the equation. Through forums such as the Business Aviation Coalition for Sustainable Aviation Fuel, we have the framework to decarbonize the aviation sector together.

Leading in Electric Aviation and Advanced Air Mobility

Electric aviation and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) represents the next generation of air transportation in the United States. Through electrification and next-generation battery technology, AAM will advance the nation towards sustainable, zero-emission aerospace and open new transportation opportunities to

move people between and within urban, suburban, and rural areas. AAM has the potential to directly connect communities that legacy infrastructure investments may have left behind. The technology will improve mobility, leverage existing public transportation systems, create workforce opportunities, reduce congestion, and support emissions reductions. AAM has the potential to create nearly 300,000 jobs and become an annual \$115 billion market by 2035.

General aviation airports will be an essential part of electric aviation's future. Companies like ZeroAvia, Ampaire, and Tencam are developing all-electric or hybrid-powered aircraft that will have zero emissions and drastically reduced noise and frequently operate at general aviation airports. These same airports will also support AAM operations as they are often located closer to communities and provide the existing infrastructure that can readily support electric aviation. In a 2020 Electric Aircraft Feasibility Study, the State of Washington identified its 124 general aviation airports as ideal locations for charging infrastructure. The study also analyzed infrastructure at each general aviation airport and found that 72 airports are currently well situated to support electric aviation operations.

A vital element of the push to expand AAM will be the large-scale rollout of charging infrastructure for these electric aircraft, especially charging facilities at existing airports. Without the necessary charging infrastructure in place, it is difficult for private businesses and individuals to be confident enough to switch to cleaner, electric aviation. We have seen a similar dynamic with the transition to electric vehicles in automobiles, and policymakers have responded appropriately by providing tax incentives for businesses and individuals to install EV charging stations.

The Alternative Fuel Vehicle Refueling Property Tax Credit (section 30C of the Internal Revenue Code) allows for a 30% tax credit for the cost of any qualified alternative fuel vehicle refueling property, which includes electric vehicle charging stations and hydrogen refueling stations. Recognizing the challenges posed by climate change and the need to accelerate the transition to a decarbonized future, the Administration and Congress have released proposals to enhance and extend the section 30C tax credit for EV charging stations.

NBAA and our AAM Roundtable support a simple technical change to modernize the section 30C tax credit to ensure that the critical investments necessary for AAM, or electric aviation, charging infrastructure are covered and similarly deployed. Leveraging private investment with an expanded Sec. 30C tax credit is key to the successful rollout of charging stations for electric aviation across our existing network of more than 5,000 public-use airports.

Finally, thanks to the dedication of Chair Larsen, Ranking Member Graves, and their committed staff, we are proud that H.R. 6270, the Advanced Aviation Modernization Act, was approved by the full Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. The AAIM Act authorizes funding to plan for and eventually build critical new AAM infrastructure by leveraging existing public transportation facilities to support AAM operations and fostering engagement programs to introduce the latest technologies to diverse communities. This legislation, which has nearly 30 bi-partisan co-sponsors, will position the United States to maintain its global leadership in aviation while providing the tools to create thousands of new green jobs for our skilled aviation workforce.

Conclusion

This hearing and similar discussions with policymakers are critical because they bring together aviation stakeholders around solutions for a sustainable future. The United States has a general aviation airport network second to none, and these facilities are rapidly embracing emissions reductions and a more sustainable operating model. Equally important is that general aviation airports will support electric aviation by providing locations for charging infrastructure and connecting AAM to communities.

We look forward to engaging with the Aviation Subcommittee on policy solutions, such as the SAF blender's tax credit and AAIM Act that provide the tools for aviation's sustainable future.