



## Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kelly Sloan  
970-424-6615

### **CABA-BACKED LASER STRIKE BILL PASSES, SUSTAINABILITY EFFORT STALLS**

**DENVER, CO.** (May 11, 2023) – Of the three bills actively advanced during the just-completed Colorado 2023 Legislative Session by the Colorado Aviation Business Association (CABA), a grass-roots membership organization focused on the support and promotion of business and general aviation across the state, one became law, one has become a federal bill, and one stalled in the Colorado State House.

SB23-093, which made it a Class-6 felony in the state to aim a laser device at an aircraft, passed both chambers on a broad bipartisan vote and was signed into law by Governor Jared Polis.

HB23-1083 was an effort by some state lawmakers to allow aviation career training to be eligible for funding through 529 savings programs. It was discovered early in the process that the required change in the law needed to happen at the federal level; subsequently, the U.S. House of Representatives introduced [H.R. 1818](#), with bipartisan sponsorship.

Another priority bill for CABA, however, stalled in its second committee, despite strong bipartisan support in its first hearing. HB23-1289, Sustainable Advancements in Aviation Tax Credits, was introduced in the Colorado State House, sponsored by House Assistant Minority Leader Rose Pugliese (R-Colorado Springs) and Rep. Shannon Bird (D-Westminster), as well as by senators Jeff Bridges (D-Centennial) and Larry Liston (R-Colorado Springs). The bill would have offered tax credits to airports, fixed-base operators, and aviation businesses for upgrading to electric ground support equipment, as well as offer a tax credit for investment into a business that conducts research, development, or production of alternative aviation fuels or powerplants, including alternatives to leaded aviation gas, or the development of related infrastructure.

Chris Swathwood, chair of the legislative affairs committee for CABA, said that while he was disappointed that the bill did not advance through the legislative process, he believes the appropriate message was sent.

“Colorado’s aviation community has always sought to provide solutions to problems,” he said. “With the bipartisan introduction of HB23-1289, and the strong support it received in the first committee, we have demonstrated our willingness to find solutions to the technological and financial challenges we face as an industry and as members of the broader community.”

“HB23-1289 provided a way to help offset the additional costs associated with adopting cleaner technology for ground support equipment, and, most importantly, offered incentives to pursue the technology of tomorrow and a pathway for innovation that would benefit the aviation industry as a whole, and the communities that depend on it,” he added.

The bill was the result of months of work by CABA, the bill sponsors, and several other stakeholders. It died on the calendar in the Colorado House Appropriations Committee after passing out of the House Finance Committee on a bipartisan 9-2 vote. The Colorado Energy Office, an executive branch agency, was initially supportive of the effort, but opted instead to back an alternative tax credit scheme that would help subsidize the construction of an SAF-only production facility by a major airline at Denver International Airport, cutting off the expected source of funding for the bill.

“It was disappointing that the governor’s office chose to adopt a vector that will only benefit the largest commercial airlines, rather than take the broader, more industry-inclusive and technologically agnostic approach that we proposed,” said Swathwood. “But we are pleased that our efforts received the support they did and are grateful to the bill sponsors for helping us highlight our industry’s commitment to meeting environmental challenges, in particular to finding safe, affordable, and technically viable alternatives to leaded av gas.”

Swathwood said the investment tax credit’s applicability to leaded aviation gas alternatives was a key provision in the bill. “Aviation is the last transportation sector that uses leaded fuel, as we have an entire class of aircraft that require it to safely operate,” said Swathwood. “Alternatives to leaded aviation gas are emerging but are still in their infancy. With this bill we had hoped to spur the investment needed to make those fuels a reality.”

Swathwood said that the organization’s crowning achievement this session was the passage of a bill to make it a state crime to aim a laser device at an aircraft. While it is a federal crime, with limited federal law enforcement resources in the state, there was little local police or district attorneys could do to deter or prosecute offenders. “As everyone in aviation knows, this is a huge and growing problem,” he said. “We were pleased to see this bill receive the support it did, and are grateful to our bill sponsors, Senator Joann Ginal (D-Fort Collins) and Bob Gardner (R-Colorado Springs), and Representatives Matt Soper (R-Delta) and Lindsay Daugherty (D-Arvada), as well as to our industry partners, particularly Flight For Life, for helping us make the skies over Colorado a little safer.”

For more information, contact Kelly Sloan, 970-424-6615 email: [kvsloan@gmail.com](mailto:kvsloan@gmail.com)

###

*The Colorado Aviation Business Association (CABA) is a grass-roots membership organization focused on the support and promotion of Business and General Aviation across the State of Colorado*