



HELP SAVE HARTFORD-BRAINARD AIRPORT

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Hartford Brainard Airport Association, Inc. (HBAA)

is a grass-roots organization of general aviation, private and commercial pilots, business leaders and others dedicated to preserving the airport as a valuable community asset and vital economic resource that supports Connecticut's economy and provides significant benefits to the capital city and region.

HBAA works to promote the educational opportunities that already exist at Brainard, encouraging city residents to pursue careers in the fields of aviation and aircraft maintenance.

[JOIN HERE](#)

Call for Membership

HBAA is asking all supporters to consider joining HBAA membership today. Let your voice in favor of Brainard be heard.

Legislature approves study of Brainard Airport property

On May 7, Governor Lamont signed into law House Bill 5506, the state budget-implementer, which requires the state to conduct a study of the Hartford Brainard Airport property. The original bill before the legislature, Senate Bill 463, also would have required an analysis of Brainard but it would have been conducted by a redevelopment agency with a goal of repurposing the airport, effectively closing the airport.

Following vigorous opposition by HBAA, numerous pilots and business owners, AOPA, Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA), and others, the bill was changed significantly. The bill is effective July 1, 2022. A report of the analysis's findings must be submitted to the legislature by October 15, 2023. HBAA plans to monitor the study and seeks to provide expertise to the agency managing the analysis and its consultants.

What does HB 5506 do?

The bill requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to assess the benefits and opportunity costs to Hartford and the state of the current or alternative uses of the airport property. DECD must issue a request for proposals for an entity to oversee the analysis and produce the report. It requires the selected entity to subsequently issue separate requests for qualifications to hire consultants to analyze economic, environmental and regulatory components.

Additionally, the bill requires (CAA) to assist and collaborate with the consultants. It also requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to obtain from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers any information or reports it has generated in the last 10 years about the Connecticut River in Hartford and Wethersfield. DEEP must provide the information or reports to DECD to distribute to the appropriate consultants to inform their analysis.

Also, the bill generally prohibits CAA from entering into any agreements or incurring any obligations that would further encumber the property or prohibit or impinge developing alternative uses, except (1) any agreement or obligation that allows for termination without liability in the event the airport is to be closed in the future; or (2) acceptance of FAA grants deemed necessary to safely operate the airport. However, the bill specifies that nothing that extends or results in extending a runway is considered to be for safety maintenance purposes.



DECD Commissioner David Lehman, left, and HBAA President Dr. Michael Teiger at VIP Avionics, following a recent tour of Brainard Airport.

HBAA debriefs large audience at airport

On Saturday, June 11, HBAA hosted an event at Brainard Airport to discuss the airport property study and next steps for the organization. More than 40 people attended the event, including a pilot and association executive from East Hampton, NY who helped oppose the closure of their airport on Long Island.

Dr. Teiger presented the history and objectives of the organization, background of legislation to close the airport and the resulting study, HBAA's ongoing public policy advocacy efforts, and initiatives to make Brainard economically viable to Hartford and the state.

"You are the users of the airport and supporters of General Aviation. You have a big stake in Brainard's future," Dr. Teiger said to attendees.

Attendees discussed a number of ideas, ranging from partnering with minority pilot associations to address the pilot shortage to engaging Hartford-area corporations that fly aircraft in and out of the airport.

HBAA plans to further engage attendees as part of its efforts to grow the organization. Active participation in HBAA's efforts by all members of our aviation community was encouraged.

State officials tour Brainard Airport

In the last several months, as part of its advocacy campaign in support of preserving Brainard Airport, HBAA's board has hosted numerous visits to the airport by state and local officials interested in the site's future. Those visits typically include a brief meeting and presentation by members of the HBAA executive team, discussion of the issues that confront Brainard, and a tour of businesses on site, including VIP Avionics and CT Aero Tech School.

Officials who have participated in recent tours include: Jeffrey Beckham, Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management; David Lehman, Commissioner of Economic and Community Development; state senators Doug McCrory (D-Hartford) and Henri Martin (R-Bristol); state representatives Jill Barry (D-Glastonbury), Christie Carpino (R-Cromwell), Holly Cheeseman (R-Niantic), Tom Delnicki (R-South Windsor), Mary Mushinsky (D-Wallingford), and Tami Zawistowski (R-East Granby); Hartford city councilmen John Gale, James Sanchez, Tiana Hercules, Nick Lebron and Joshua Michtom; and Wethersfield Mayor Mike Rell.

"The tours have been very effective," said Dr. Teiger.

"Officials learn more about what goes on at a general aviation airport and that a great deal is happening here at Brainard. They have left a strong impression on visitors."



Jeffrey Beckham, Secretary of Office of Policy and Management (OPM) with Rep. Jill Barry (D-Glastonbury) and VIP Avionics Owner Barbara Rowley

Senator Henri Martin (L) (R-Bristol), Deputy Republican Leader and ranking member of the Finance Committee, toured Brainard Airport on April 18, 2022



HBAA extends an open invitation to any lawmakers and state or local officials who would like to tour the airport.



EAA Hosts International Young Eagles Day at Brainard Airport

On a beautiful Saturday morning, June 12th, President Steve Socolosky hosted an International **Young Eagles Day** event at Brainard Airport. The event promoted aviation to young people ages 8 to 17 and dozens of students showed up for the event to take a short introductory flight.

Steve teaches an Aerospace program at Middletown High School and gathers students from all over the region to events such as this one. Over a third of all Connecticut's Young Eagles have come from Hartford. With the national pilot shortage that is expected for the next 15 years, programs such as this is where it all starts. And Brainard Airport hosts Chapter 166, one of hundreds of chapters in the US and Canada where over 2 million young people have experienced the excitement of aviation since the EAA Young Eagles program was launched in 1992.

Young Eagles is a program created by the US Experimental Aircraft Association, designed to give children between the ages of 8 to 17 an opportunity to experience flight in a general aviation airplane while educating them about aviation. The program is offered free of charge with costs covered by the volunteers.

"We are so grateful to Hartford Jet Center and owner Lindsey Rutka for giving Chapter 166 the space to host the event," said Steve. "Without Brainard, we would not be able to promote flying and all the careers associated to aviation to young people and give them a live, hands-on experience that will stay with them for a lifetime."



**Hartford Brainard
Airport Association**

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