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### [BFJ Study](#)

Next Public Meeting:  
July 13th, 2023 @ 6:30p  
Metzner Community Center

## [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.

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## HARTFORD BRAINARD AIRPORT ASSOCIATION LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



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July 5, 2023

### Legislature approves aerospace and aviation training measure

On June 28, the Governor approved a new aerospace and aviation training policy passed by the legislature that will help grow careers and improve workforce education in the aviation industry.

Senate Bill 1 ([Public Act 23-167 sec 28](#)) allows a board of education to partner with local employers in the aviation or aerospace industry to develop and offer an apprenticeship training program for students within its school district. Under the bill, the apprenticeship training program must give students (1) on-site training where they learn immediate job skills and earn course credits, (2) information on the CT Aero Tech School for Aviation Maintenance Technicians' educational programs, and (3) help completing the school's admissions application.

Additionally, the bill requires a school board that offers the apprenticeship program to report to the Education Committee about the number of students who participated in and completed the program and enrolled in CT Aero Tech. The bill further requires the Connecticut Technical Education Career System (CTECS) to convene a working group, which includes aerospace industry business and community organizations, to study the feasibility and cost of an aviation and aerospace high school.

The bill arose out of a proposal initiated by HBAA, which would have required the CTECS to develop a pilot program to establish a pipeline for students to enroll in CT Aero Tech. Proposed [Senate Bill 282](#) was introduced by Education Committee ranking member Sen. Eric Berthel (R-Watertown) at the request of HBAA and the policy was incorporated into SB 1.

"We're very excited about this new policy," said Dr. Michael Teiger, president of HBAA. "HBAA works to promote the educational opportunities that already exist at Brainard Airport, encouraging city and regional residents to pursue careers in aviation and aircraft maintenance. The bill will help develop the state's workforce by training students for aviation and aerospace manufacturing careers."

### CAA airport purchases will require approval of municipality

In the legislative session that ended last month, the General Assembly passed a bill requiring any purchase by the Connecticut Airport Authority of a municipally owned airport to be approved by the municipality in which the airport is located. The bill was initially proposed by lawmakers representing Stratford, including Republican Leader Senator Kevin Kelly and Representative Joe Gresko.

Also, [Public Act 23-135](#) changes other laws concerning airports and aircraft. The bill requires owners and operators of aircraft based or hangared in the state to maintain liability insurance meeting specified coverage criteria; eliminates CAA's role in aircraft registration, which is currently primarily handled by municipalities; requires publicly owned airport owners or operators, rather than CAA, to develop and revise the approach plans for their airports after considering specified criteria; and allows, rather than requires, the state to fund capital improvements at private airports up to 90% of eligible costs.

The state budget, [Public Act 23-204](#), expands on the airport purchase requirement to include CAA leases and applies it to municipally controlled airports. Also, the bill expands the requirements for approval, making these CAA actions subject to approval by the legislative bodies of both the municipality that owns or controls the airport and the municipality in which the airport is located. Under the bill, municipalities cannot unreasonably withhold approval, and it does not supersede an existing agreement regarding an airport owned or controlled by a municipality and the municipality in which the airport is located.



## Changes coming to aviation fuel tax

Beginning July 1, 2023, the state budget exempts sales of aviation fuel from the petroleum products gross earnings tax, and, starting in two years, subjects it to a new aviation fuel tax at a rate of 15 cents per gallon.

[Public Act 23-204](#), which the legislature passed and the Governor signed into law on June 12, also transfers \$8 million from the Special Transportation Fund to an airport and aviation account in each of the next two years provided the Connecticut Airport Authority enters into a management agreement for Sikorsky Airport. Revenue in the account is used to fund capital projects at CAA-owned and municipal general aviation airports, including Brainard Airport. Beginning in 2025, all revenue received from the new aviation fuel tax would be deposited into the account.

The major passenger and cargo airline industry and several individual carriers, including Avelo Airlines, advocated vigorously for changes to aviation fuel taxes. In [testimony](#) to the Finance Committee, Avelo argued that Connecticut's effective state jet fuel tax of 8.8% per gallon is "highly uncompetitive with nearby states in the region", claiming that most states charge a flat rate of five cents per gallon or less. The airline said the tax inhibits its future growth in Connecticut and its ability to add new routes, keep fares low and hire more employees. Avelo sought to convert the jet fuel tax from its current market price per gallon to a flat tax of five cents per gallon.

CAA expressed serious concerns with the proposal and advocated strongly for GA airports in negotiations on the final budget provision. In [testimony](#) to the committee, Executive Director Kevin Dillon cautioned against making any significant changes to the tax until its impact can be fully analyzed and understood. CAA noted that many states with lower aviation fuel taxes "provide significant levels of state funding to support aviation (as opposed to no support in Connecticut)."

HBAA will monitor implementation of the new tax closely and any impact it may have on Brainard Airport.

## HBAA Editorial: Next Hartford Mayor and City Officials Should Support Brainard's Future Economic Potential

Next Thursday, July 13, BFJ Planning, the consultant hired by DECD to study Brainard Airport, will hold its 4th public meeting to discuss several preliminary results of its study. We hope that the consultant presents the results of the important ground sampling tests recently conducted to determine whether or not there is significant toxic land contamination that would prevent public use redevelopment of the property. Considering the proximity of the airport to the MDC waste treatment facility and the recently shuttered MIRA trash to energy facility, HBAA believes that it will be unlikely the property would be found to be remediable enough to allow for any redevelopment to occur in the South Meadows area.

Nevertheless, the effort to close Brainard Airport still has its proponents, even though there are meagerly few meaningful repurposing options for the property. Leading that effort to close has been state senator John Fonfara of Hartford, while his opponent in the upcoming Hartford mayoral race, recently retired judge and longtime state lawmaker Eric Coleman strongly favors keeping Brainard open. Coleman has formally declared his support for the airport, seeing it as a vibrant facility with great economic potential for the city of Hartford and the greater Hartford region. Candidate Arunan Arulampalam, presently the CEO of Hartford Land Bank and one who clearly understands economic development through land development projects, has yet to stake a clear position on the issue of closure.

The Hartford city council and retiring mayor Luke Bronin, have curiously avoided acknowledging that if the airport benefits the region by its success, this becomes an indirect but substantial economic benefit to their city. Even without implementing any of the recommendations to maximize the airport's value from the 2016 study by the legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee, the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) reported that in 2021, Brainard contributed \$59 million in GDP income for the state as well as supplied 361 jobs for the region. Hartford receives a substantial share of this economic activity.

Brainard can and does attract industry and business activity, promotes educational opportunities to the region as well as the city of Hartford, and concentrates vital public health, emergency and rescue services at the airport to benefit and serve the region, all of which have positive direct and indirect financial impact that benefits Hartford. Electric aircraft, increased drone activity and electric vertical take-off and landing vehicles (eVTOL) will all be highly profitable for up-and-coming, cutting-edge aviation industries and Brainard is perfectly positioned to benefit from this sector's growth.

A wise mayoral candidate and a city council with foresight should not fail to include themselves in the exciting and profitable future that will come from the significant growth forecast in general aviation in the next decade. A substantial opportunity to boost Hartford's economy is here now and will be missed if the airport closes.

In addition to focusing on the city, HBAA is convinced that a much wiser path is to recognize the economic value to the region, made possible by exploiting the benefits of a local airport. This would make Hartford a much more attractive and exciting destination for new investment partnering with the city. Economic success breeds more economic success. All city and state leaders should not miss out on this unique economic opportunity for the future for all its residents and take the wise and responsible stand to support keeping Brainard Airport open and adopt policies that will help grow and revitalize the facility.

Visit our Web site:  
[www.hfdbaa.org](http://www.hfdbaa.org)

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