

FAA, Industry Chart Path to Eliminate Lead Emissions from General Aviation by the end of 2030

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WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced a new initiative that outlines how our country can safely eliminate the use of leaded aviation fuel by the end of 2030 without adversely affecting the existing piston-engine fleet.

“This is a safe and practical path to a lead-free aviation system,” **FAA Administrator Steve Dickson said**. “We look forward to starting a new partnership with aviation stakeholders and the communities that hosts airports to achieve this important goal.”

The effort to remove leaded aviation fuels will be based on four pillars of action that involve the FAA, the Environmental Protection Agency, fuel suppliers and distributors, airports, engine and aircraft manufacturers, research institutions, associations, environmental experts, communities and other key stakeholders. The four pillars are:

- **Develop Unleaded Fuels Infrastructure and Assess Commercial Viability:** Industry stakeholders will coordinate production of commercially viable unleaded fuels and establish necessary infrastructure, efficient distribution channels and widespread usage of these fuels.
- **Support Research & Development and Technology Innovations:** The FAA and industry stakeholders will support research and testing of piston engine modifications and/or engine retrofits necessary for unleaded fuel operations. They will also focus on new technology development and the application/adaptation of those technologies, including electric/hybrid engine technologies to enable transition to a lead free General Aviation fleet.
- **Continue to Evaluate and Authorize Safe Unleaded Fuels:** The FAA will address fleet-wide authorization of unleaded aviation fuels of different octane levels. Piston Aviation Fuel Initiative will continue to evaluate, test and qualify high-octane aviation unleaded fuels with the objective to ultimately transition the fleet to unleaded aviation fuel.
- **Establish Any Necessary Policies:** The EPA is evaluating whether emissions from piston-engine aircraft operating on leaded fuel contribute to air pollution that endangers public health or welfare. EPA plans to issue a proposal for public review and comment in 2022 and take final action in 2023. If the EPA issues regulations on lead emissions from piston-engine aircraft, the FAA would subsequently publish regulations that certify piston engine modifications, new piston engines that do not require leaded aviation fuel, and regulate fuel components for aviation fuels. The FAA will consider policies/programs to support unleaded fuel infrastructure.



These pillars today leverage and build upon a continuing collaboration with industry through the Piston Aviation Fuel Initiative. Aviation industry leaders are welcoming the partnership:

Pete Bunce, GAMA President and CEO - “The future of light general aviation depends on moving away from leaded fuels. To accomplish this imperative, it is important to note that our industry, as well as the industry providing our avgas, are united in partnering with the FAA to advance a sustainable future. The EAGLE public-private partnership will ensure coordination of a safe and reliable transition to an unleaded future state for piston-engine aircraft. GAMA’s manufacturing and maintenance companies look forward to working with the FAA, industry colleagues and other stakeholders to carry out this challenging and ambitious initiative. EAGLE will be the enabler for meeting our environment goals while keeping aviation safety, as well as the broader economic and public benefits provided by general aviation, at the forefront.”

Mark Baker, President and CEO of AOPA - “While the industry has a shared vision of a lead-free aviation future, the transition must be done in a smart and safe way, and in a manner that works for the entire general aviation fleet. Joining together in a broad coalition to reinforce our commitment, and outlining the plan to get there, is a very positive step forward. We look forward to making good progress under the EAGLE banner.”

AAAE President & CEO Todd Hauptli - “Environmental stewardship is a high priority for airport executives, and AAAE is pleased to join with FAA and our partners in the general aviation industry to chart a path forward to a lead-free future for aviation fuel. The EAGLE initiative sets a meaningful goal that will benefit the environment, public health, and the future of general aviation, which plays such an important role in communities across the country and to the national economy. We look forward to working with the government and our industry partners to make the promises of EAGLE a reality.”

Jack J. Pelton, CEO and Chairman of the Board of the Experimental Aircraft Association - "Securing a lead-free future for aviation fuel is a formidable challenge, but the aviation community has faced and met previous challenges with ingenuity and imagination. Our goal is to solve the complex issues surrounding lead-free aviation fuels with innovations that ensure safety, as well as reliability, marketplace availability, and continue to provide the countless benefits of general and recreational aviation to our nation and the world."

James Viola, HAI President and CEO - "The EAGLE initiative brings together stakeholders dedicated to advancing a sustainable future for general aviation. It is imperative that we safely transition piston-engine aircraft to lead-free aviation fuel by the end of 2030. This initiative is the right thing to do for the environment and the economic health of our industry. Helicopter Association International (HAI) is committed to this partnership and applauds the broad public-private partnership that has come together enabling industry and government to accelerate a solution. The vertical flight industry is eager to work with all stakeholders to move the EAGLE initiative forward."

National Air Transportation Association President and CEO Timothy Obitts - "NATA and its members are dedicated to finding a single drop-in unleaded fuel to replace 100LL that is compatible with existing infrastructure. We thank the FAA for its guidance and support, and look forward to working with our industry partners toward a safe and viable solution. The EAGLE initiative is another great example of how we are uniting for the safety, success, and future of the industry."

NBAA President and CEO Ed Bolen - "We are proud to be a part of this pioneering initiative to chart a course for a future free of leaded fuels. The EAGLE initiative is a very important step in ensuring the sustainability, safety and security of aviation in the years to come."

This announcement is part of the FAA's ongoing effort to build a sustainable aviation system. In November, the U.S. released its first-ever comprehensive Aviation Climate Action Plan to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Earlier in 2021, the FAA announced more than \$100 million in matching grants to increase aircraft efficiency, reduce noise and aircraft emissions, and develop and implement new software to reduce taxi delays.

Find more information about the FAA and its sustainability efforts at its [sustainability page](#).