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HAI Joins Aviation Stakeholder Groups in Committing to Lead-Free Aviation Fuels Transition

Alexandria, Virginia (February 23, 2022) — HAI joined leaders of aviation and petroleum groups in committing to an initiative laying out a clear plan to transition piston-engine aircraft to lead-free aviation fuels by the end of 2030.

Announced at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., today, the Eliminate Aviation Gasoline Lead Emissions (EAGLE) initiative calls for an industry and government partnership to expand and accelerate the actions and policies necessary for a viable high-octane unleaded replacement for the current 100 octane low-lead aviation gasoline (100LL), without compromising the existing U.S. transportation infrastructure system, aviation safety, and the economic and broader public benefits of general aviation.

The FAA hosted an industry stakeholder roundtable meeting in November 2021 to discuss a strategic plan toward an unleaded avgas future, culminating in the establishment of the EAGLE initiative, which is structured around four key pillars – Regulatory and Policy, Unleaded Fuel Testing and Qualification, Research and Development, and Business Infrastructure and Implementation. These activities, which will require full government support, provide the foundation toward safe unleaded aviation fuels for piston-engine aircraft. Industry stakeholders and the FAA will begin working on the EAGLE initiative right away with a partnership symposium, to define a detailed workplan, planned for March.

FAA Administrator Steve Dickson pledged the FAA’s support of the initiative’s collaborative partnership.

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

Groups committed to the EAGLE initiative include the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), American Petroleum Institute (API), Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA), Helicopter Association International (HAI), National Air Transportation Association (NATA), and National Business Aviation Association (NBAA).

“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,” said Pete Bunce, GAMA President and CEO.

“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,” said Mark Baker, President and CEO of AOPA. “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.”

“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,” AAAE President & CEO Todd Hauptli. “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.”

“We welcome the opportunity to partner with the FAA and general aviation industry to develop an achievable pathway that safely transitions piston-engine aircraft to unleaded aviation fuels. The EAGLE public-private partnership brings together the critical cross-section of industry and government expertise that will be necessary to succeed in this complex undertaking. We look forward being a part of this collaborative effort to deliver a solution that ensures general aviators’ continued access to the safe and reliable fuels while strengthening environmental progress.” – API VP of Downstream Policy Ron Chittim.

“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,” said Jack J. Pelton, CEO and Chairman of the Board of the Experimental Aircraft Association. “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.”

“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,” said James Viola, HAI President and CEO.

National Air Transportation Association President and CEO Timothy Obitts stated, "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."

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

The group endorsed commitment can be found [HERE](#). A graphic outlining the four pillars of EAGLE can be found [HERE](#). A background document regarding EAGLE can be found [HERE](#).

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HAI is the professional trade association for the civil helicopter industry. HAI's members represent more than 3,000 aviation businesses and individuals, and safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.