

HB 3257 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

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Meeting Dates: 4/18, 4/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes the 17-member Task Force on Electric Aircraft. Directs Task Force to identify issues related to facilitation of electric aircraft in Oregon, including strategies to promote the development of necessary infrastructure, recommendation of six airports to participate in a pilot program, and statutory and regulatory changes to integrate electric aircraft into the state's transportation system. Specifies that Department of Aviation will provide staff support to the Task Force. Sunsets December 31, 2024. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon is one of many states that has prioritized the adoption of electric vehicles to phase out motor vehicles powered by fossil fuels, with the goal of reducing the impact of the transportation sector on greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change. A number of companies and other entities are working to develop electric aircraft to similarly transform the aviation sector. While electric aircraft date back to the 19th century, in the form of a scale model airship powered by potash batteries, and electric model aircraft have flown for nearly 50 years, the problems associated with the weight of batteries on powered aircraft has been slow in development in commercially viable forms. Modern aviation is estimated to account for over two percent of global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, according to the International Energy Agency.

In 2022, a Washington company, Eviation, began testing an all-electric commuter aircraft prototype capable of intercity flights at an altitude of 15,000 feet. Other companies are developing smaller aircraft that could be used for intracity operations.

House Bill 3257 creates a 17-member Task Force on Electric Aircraft, to be comprised of representatives of the electric aircraft and aircraft manufacturing industries, electric utilities, the Oregon Department of Aviation, Business Oregon, nonprofit organizations representing airports, Oregon aviation industries, and airports interested in pursuing the infrastructure necessary to service electric aircraft. The Task Force is charged with studying issues related to facilitating electric aircraft in Oregon, including development of a pilot program and recommending statutory and regulatory changes.