

12 February 2026

To: House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Representative Tom Kessler, Chair

Re: Verbal Proponent Testimony for HB 2687

Testimony in Support of Kansas Senate Bill 2687

Chairman Kessler and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

My name is Justin Coletti, I am the General Manager of Top Aviation Services – a prominent flight school located here in Topeka.

Kansas has long occupied a position of national prominence within the aviation community. From its deep agricultural heritage to its globally recognized aircraft manufacturing industry, our state has consistently served not merely as geographic flyover territory, but as an epicenter of aeronautical innovation and progress. Senate Bill 2687 presents a measured and forward-thinking opportunity to extend that legacy by responsibly authorizing seaplane operations within the State of Kansas.

Seaplanes are not an ancillary chapter in aviation history; they are foundational to its development. Before paved runways stretched across America, waterways functioned as the original national airfield system. Lakes, rivers, and coastal harbors provided the operational surface that made sustained air travel possible. In fact, seaplane usage represented the first truly practical opportunity for coast-to-coast air travel in the United States. Water was the infrastructure that connected the nation. More recently though, our very own Textron Aviation used Kansas lakes to certify its aircraft as a seaplane.

Senate Bill 2687 is not about nostalgia. It is about strategic access and economic foresight. Authorizing regulated seaplane usage in Kansas would stimulate aviation tourism, expand flight training opportunities, and generate local economic activity — particularly within rural communities that already steward substantial water resources.

Beyond operational considerations, this legislation carries meaningful symbolic value. For generations, Kansas has been described as a “flyover state.” Senate Bill 2687 offers the opportunity to redefine that narrative. By welcoming seaplanes to our waterways, Kansas can transition from being merely traversed at altitude to being intentionally visited and experienced. We have the opportunity to become not the flyover state, but the splash-in state — a destination rather than a waypoint.

As a pilot and aviation professional, I have witnessed firsthand how access to infrastructure — whether constructed or natural — directly shapes innovation, commerce, and community vitality. When access expands, opportunity follows. Kansas has the geographic resources, aviation heritage, and professional expertise necessary to lead responsibly in this domain.

Senate Bill 2687 reflects measured governance, economic pragmatism, and respect for Kansas' longstanding aviation identity. It acknowledges our history while positioning our state for future growth.

I respectfully urge you to support Senate Bill 2687 and allow Kansas to continue its leadership in American aviation — this time by embracing its waterways as part of that future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Justin Coletti, CFI-S, Tailwheel CFI

Justin@goflytopeka.com | 785- 251-3395

15026 Highway K4, Maple Hill, KS 66507