

**12 February 2026**

**To: House Committee on Federal and State Affairs**

**Representative Tom Kessler, Chair**

**Re: Verbal Proponent Testimony for HB 2687**

Chairman Kessler and members of the committee – My name is Harrison Deaton. I am a Certified Flight Instructor with instrument and multi-engine instructor ratings (CFII, MEII). I have spent my career training Kansas pilots to operate safely, responsibly, and in full compliance with federal aviation regulations. I appreciate the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of House Bill 2687.

From a professional aviation perspective, Kansas's current statutory silence regarding seaplane operations creates unnecessary confusion and discourages lawful, well-regulated activity. The lack of clarity in state law has resulted in inconsistent interpretations across agencies and jurisdictions, making safe and compliant operations difficult to accomplish in practice. Seaplane operations are not experimental or unregulated. Pilots operating seaplanes must already meet stringent federal requirements. Importantly, once a seaplane is operating on the water, it is subject to water navigation rules while the pilot remains accountable under law for careless or reckless operations. Instructors like myself emphasize that seaplane pilots operate under two regulatory frameworks simultaneously – aviation and maritime – which reinforces conservative decision-making and safety.

HB 2687 does not remove safety oversight, diminish agency authority, or grant unrestricted access to Kansas waterways. Instead, it provides clarity by affirming that seaplanes are lawful aircraft under Kansas law while preserving existing federal, state, and local authority over safety, environmental protection, and waterway management. Clear law promotes compliance. When pilots understand what is permitted and under what conditions, they are far more likely to operate transparently and responsibly. Ambiguity, on the other hand, discourages lawful activity and creates inconsistent enforcement without improving safety outcomes. As an instructor responsible for training pilots to the highest safety standards, I support HB 2687 because it aligns Kansas statute with federal aviation practices, neighboring state policies, and real-world aviation operations. It provides clarity without sacrificing safety.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to give HB 2687 favorable consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony.

Sincerely,

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