

Regarding: Comment on House Bill 2687 hearing scheduled for Feb. 12, 2026

To: House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Feb. 8, 2026

I am writing in support of H.B. 2687. My testimony is individual, and also reflects organizations of which I am part of.

I have been a pilot in the western Missouri area since 1980, and have done much of my flying in the state of Kansas, for both business and for recreation, as recently as yesterday. I have flown in Kansas to get to jobsites, to obtain parts and services, fuel and meals, to fly children, and simply for fun.

One type of aircraft I am qualified to fly is seaplanes. I have found that it often quite difficult in many areas to determine if a body of water can be used for seaplane operations, and that's also the case in Kansas. My findings are that the controlling authority for the upper part of Kansas is the Kansas Corps of Engineers, and they don't permit seaplane operations. The lower part of Kansas is controlled by the Oklahoma Corps of Engineers, and they do permit seaplane operations. If I were to fly near this boundary, how would I know where I am legal or not? Pilot navigation charts do not show such a boundary. This seems arbitrary and unlikely, and I am not even certain that I have a proper understanding, which illustrates how hard it is to get solid information. Worse, sometimes jurisdictions don't even agree on permitted operations.

As a seaplane pilot, I seek the same recreational enjoyment that boat operators want: the relaxation that is found being around a body of water. Seaplane pilots often will land and either anchor or pull up to a beach to swim, fish, camp, have a picnic and the other typical freedoms that we enjoy in the US. I have flown over much of eastern Kansas observing the lakes, noting that most are quite suitable and safe for seaplane operations. There are some that are not, and I would have no desire to "chance it" there.

As you know, aviation is an integral part of Kansas. There are numerous flight schools in the State, including Kansas State University, a nationally-respected program. Even with all that training, there is not a single seaplane school, though the state certainly has the lakes to support it. The vague nature of whether seaplane operations are permitted or not contributes to this lack. As the flying public are responsible people, they don't dare fly where they're uncertain if they will be breaking laws doing so. Seaplane operators desire the same access that boat operators already enjoy. Indeed, a seaplane on the water must follow boating rules, so the pilots are having to meet dual standards.

Earning a pilot license, even at the lowest levels, is not trivial. Pilot invest a lot of time and money, and following rules, of which they are many, is part of the training. We don't want to jeopardize that flying illegally. By having clearly defined areas of allowed operation, pilots can responsibly operate with the safety of themselves and others in mind.

I respectfully urge the House to adopt H.B. 2687. Thank you for considering my testimony.

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