



DIVISION OF  
**AVIATION**

# Electric Logistics and Integrated Flight Testing – North Carolina (eLIFT-NC)

The NCDOT Division of Aviation eIPP Application

**Nick Short, PE, PLS**

February 4, 2026

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina



## AAM 101: North Carolina's Future in Flight



## Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)

is a general term for aviation innovation including the use of alternative fuels (like electricity) and new capabilities including vertical takeoff and landings.

## Acronyms

**AAM:** Advanced air mobility

**eCTOL:** Electric conventional takeoff and landing

**eVTOL:** Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing

**eIPP:** eVTOL Integration Pilot Program

**FAA:** Federal Aviation Administration

**NAS:** National Airspace System

**OEM:** Original equipment manufacturer

**P3:** Public-Private Partnership

**SIR:** Screening information request

**SLTT:** State, local, tribal and territorial

**UAS:** Unmanned/uncrewed aircraft system



## Executive Order (EO) 14307: Unleashing American Drone Dominance

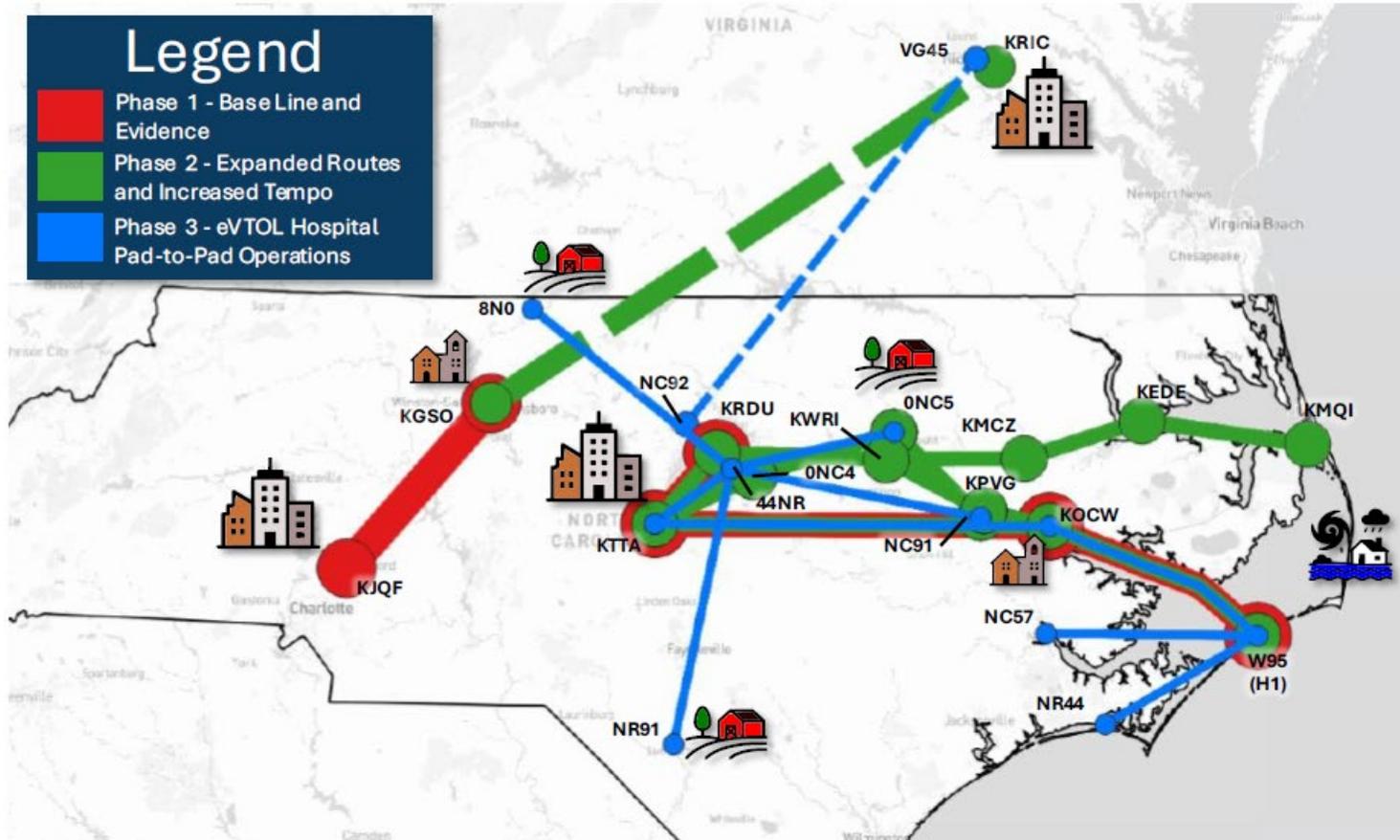
- Establishes the United States will:
  - Accelerate the safe commercialization of UAS
  - Fully integrate UAS, eVTOL and AAM into the national airspace system (NAS)
- eIPP program led by the FAA,
  - Similar structure to BEYOND Program
- Enables early AAM flight testing with operators
- Gathers data needed for future AAM rulemaking



## eLIFT-NC Vision

- Develop a statewide AAM network
- Create a connected aviation ecosystem for healthcare mobility and disaster logistics
- Create a national model for safe, scalable AAM integration
- Maintain NC's position as a leader in aviation innovation





### eLIFT-NC Benefits:

- Builds a strong statewide and regional network
- Connects urbanized zones to rural communities
- Partners with Part 135 operators, OEMs, and healthcare partners to establish flight routes
- Supplements existing operations or needs
- Supports safe integration of AAM aircraft into the National Airspace System

## Transforming Rural Healthcare

Rural communities face unique challenges in accessing healthcare.

Rural hospital closures impact access to emergency and routine care.

eLIFT-NC demonstrates safe, scalable operations that can:



Provide Improved Patient Mobility through:

- Convenient point-of-care options
- Improved access for individuals with mobility challenges



Provide Long-Term Return on Investment:

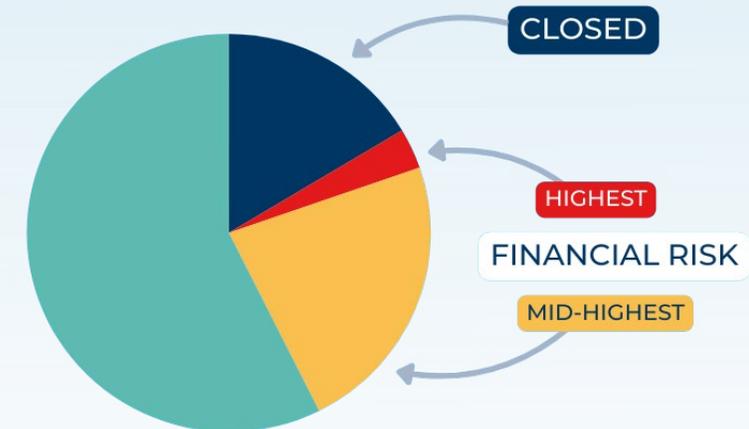
- Healthcare savings and economic development
- Every \$1 invested in eLIFT could result in \$3 – \$5 in economic return over the next decade



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Since 2006, **ten rural hospitals** in N.C. have **closed** or **converted to other uses**.

Today, N.C. has **51 rural hospitals** spread across **100 counties**.



Ranked in risk for financial distress

- **Two** are ranked in the **“highest level”**
- **Fourteen** are ranked **“mid-highest level.”**

Source: UNC Chapel Hill. (2025, December 4). *Rural Hospital closures*. The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research. <https://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/programs-projects/rural-health/rural-hospital-closures/>

# Partnering for Safe, Scalable eCTOL and eVTOL Operations



## Facilitates AAM Commercialization:

- Grows collaborations with original equipment manufacturers, operators, and healthcare systems
- Validates and enables AAM business models



## Advances National UAS Leadership

- Delivers vital data to inform FAA policies and strategies
- Establishes a replicable blueprint for safe eVTOL operations



eLIFT-NC builds on strong existing public-private partnerships.

The image displays a collection of logos for various organizations and companies. The logos are arranged in a grid-like fashion. The top row includes BETA and WakeMed. The second row features ITRE (Institute for Transportation Research and Education) and UNC Health. The third row shows Joby and MA Metro Aviation. The fourth row contains Causey Aviation Unmanned and the North Carolina Airports Association. The fifth row includes UPS Flight Forward and UrbanPort. The bottom row features Crown and AECOM.

# Criteria

## What Problems Will This Effort Solve?

### Challenges

- Rising costs & supply chain issues
- Workforce shortages
- Patient demand up 9–10% by 2034
- Rural hospital closures (12 since 2006)
- Transportation barriers & longer EMS response times
- Telehealth limits (broadband gaps)

### eLIFT-NC's Solutions

- ✓ AAM-enabled transport for patients & teams
- ✓ Rapid delivery of critical supplies
- ✓ Expand specialty access in rural areas
- ✓ Reduce system strain & optimize capacity
- ✓ Strengthen statewide healthcare resilience



# U.S. Congressional Support

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515  
December 5, 2025

The Honorable Bryan Bedford  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Bedford,

The undersigned members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation are pleased to support North Carolina's application for the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Integration Pilot Program (eIPP). This application is being submitted by North Carolina's Department of Transportation (NCDOT), in partnership with state health systems, aircraft Original Equipment Manufacturers, airline operators, service providers, and research institutions that together reflect North Carolina's longstanding national leadership in aviation.

As the birthplace of aviation, North Carolina takes pride in continuing to lead the nation in aviation innovation. NCDOT manages a comprehensive Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program with ambitions to accelerate eVTOL and AAM technology adoption. Through successful technology deployment and demonstration projects, NCDOT has developed strong partnerships in the UAS, eVTOL, and AAM space with businesses, local governments, and research institutions.

North Carolina's proposed eIPP program structure is centered on the design and development of new advanced transportation networks to build resiliency and strengthen partnerships among major healthcare facilities, airports, and logistics hubs. This program will improve healthcare for rural residents by connecting resources to health desert communities. The program will also assist NCDOT in further developing plans to integrate AAM infrastructure at airports, helipads, vertiports, and in communities. North Carolina's pilot program would accelerate safe, real-world use of AAM vehicles and their required technologies, and inform national rulemaking and future considerations for national, state, and local transportation planning.

North Carolina is poised to support the Trump Administration's ambitious goals to accelerate safe integration of UAS in the National Airspace System, advance domestic commercialization of UAS technologies at scale, and strengthen the domestic drone industrial base. We urge you to give full and fair consideration to NCDOT's eIPP proposal.

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

Sincerely,

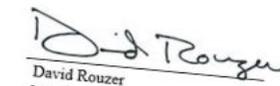
  
 Ted Budd Thom Tillis  
 United States Senator

  
 Thom Tillis  
 United States Senator

  
 Valerie P. Foushee  
 Member of Congress

  
 Brad Knott  
 Member of Congress

  
 Addison P. McDowell  
 Member of Congress

  
 David Rouzer  
 Member of Congress



# Contact Us

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