JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Assessment, Inventory, and Analysis of State-owned Aircraft and Aviation Assets

A Staff Study

November 2026

Serving the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Since 1937

REPORT

Senate Resolution 89 (2025)
Assessment, Inventory, and Analysis of State-owned Aircraft and Aviation Assets

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The report is also available at http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us
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The Joint State Government Commission was created in 1937 as the primary and central non-partisan, bicameral research and policy development agency for the General Assembly of Pennsylvania.[1]

A fourteen-member Executive Committee comprised of the leadership of both the House of Representatives and the Senate oversees the Commission. The seven Executive Committee members from the House of Representatives are the Speaker, the Majority and Minority Leaders, the Majority and Minority Whips, and the Majority and Minority Caucus Chairs. The seven Executive Committee members from the Senate are the President Pro Tempore, the Majority and Minority Leaders, the Majority and Minority Whips, and the Majority and Minority Caucus Chairs. By statute, the Executive Committee selects a chairman of the Commission from among the members of the General Assembly. Historically, the Executive Committee has also selected a Vice-Chair or Treasurer, or both, for the Commission.

The studies conducted by the Commission are authorized by statute or by a simple or joint resolution. In general, the Commission has the power to conduct investigations, study issues, and gather information as directed by the General Assembly. The Commission provides in-depth research on a variety of topics, crafts recommendations to improve public policy and statutory law, and works closely with legislators and their staff.

A Commission study may involve the appointment of a legislative task force, composed of a specified number of legislators from the House of Representatives or the Senate, or both, as set forth in the enabling statute or resolution. In addition to following the progress of a particular study, the principal role of a task force is to determine whether to authorize the publication of any report resulting from the study and the introduction of any proposed legislation contained in the report. However, task force authorization does not necessarily reflect endorsement of all the findings and recommendations contained in a report.

Some studies involve an appointed advisory committee of professionals or interested parties from across the Commonwealth with expertise in a particular topic; others are managed exclusively by Commission staff with the informal involvement of representatives of those entities that can provide insight and information regarding the particular topic. When a study involves an advisory committee, the Commission seeks consensus among the members.[2] Although an advisory committee member may represent a particular department, agency, association, or group, such representation does not necessarily reflect the endorsement of the department, agency, association, or group of all the findings and recommendations contained in a study report.

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[1] Act of July 1, 1937 (P.L.2460, No.459); 46 P.S. §§ 65–69.

[2] Consensus does not necessarily reflect unanimity among the advisory committee members on each individual policy or legislative recommendation. At a minimum, it reflects the views of a substantial majority of the advisory committee, gained after lengthy review and discussion.

Over the years, nearly one thousand individuals from across the Commonwealth have served as members of the Commission's numerous advisory committees or have assisted the Commission with its studies. Members of advisory committees bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to deliberations involving a particular study. Individuals from countless backgrounds have contributed to the work of the Commission, such as attorneys, judges, professors and other educators, state and local officials, physicians and other health care professionals, business and community leaders, service providers, administrators and other professionals, law enforcement personnel, and concerned citizens. In addition, members of advisory committees donate their time to serve the public good; they are not compensated for their service as members. Consequently, the Commonwealth receives the financial benefit of such volunteerism, along with their shared expertise in developing statutory language and public policy recommendations to improve the law in Pennsylvania.

The Commission periodically reports its findings and recommendations, along with any proposed legislation, to the General Assembly. Certain studies have specific timelines for the publication of a report, as in the case of a discrete or timely topic; other studies, given their complex or considerable nature, are ongoing and involve the publication of periodic reports. Completion of a study, or a particular aspect of an ongoing study, generally results in the publication of a report setting forth background material, policy recommendations, and proposed legislation. However, the release of a report by the Commission does not necessarily reflect the endorsement by the members of the Executive Committee, or the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Commission, of all the findings, recommendations, or conclusions contained in the report. A report containing proposed legislation may also contain official comments, which may be used to construe or apply its provisions.[3]

Since its inception, the Commission has published over 465 reports on a sweeping range of topics, including administrative law and procedure; agriculture; athletics and sports; banks and banking; commerce and trade; the commercial code; crimes and offenses; decedents, estates, and fiduciaries; detectives and private police; domestic relations; education; elections; eminent domain; environmental resources; escheats; fish; forests, waters, and state parks; game; health and safety; historical sites and museums; insolvency and assignments; insurance; the judiciary and judicial procedure; labor; law and justice; the legislature; liquor; mechanics' liens; mental health; military affairs; mines and mining; municipalities; prisons and parole; procurement; state-licensed professions and occupations; public utilities; public welfare; real and personal property; state government; taxation and fiscal affairs; transportation; vehicles; and workers' compensation.

Following the completion of a report, subsequent action on the part of the Commission may be required, and, as necessary, the Commission will draft legislation and statutory amendments, update research, track legislation through the legislative process, attend hearings, and answer questions from legislators, legislative staff, interest groups, and constituents.

[3] 1 Pa.C.S. § 1939.

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November 2026

To the Members of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania:

We are pleased to release the report, *Assessment, Inventory, and Analysis of State-owned Aircraft and Aviation Assets*, pursuant to Senate Resolution 89 of 2025. This report reviews aircraft and aviation assets owned by the Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania State Police, and the Office of the Attorney General. It presents findings and recommendations, such as more detailed record-keeping in the flight logs and more accurate reimbursements to the agencies operating the aircraft.

The report is available on our website https://jsg.legis.state.pa.us.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn J. Pasewicz
Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania covers over 44,000 square miles, and state officials sometimes need transportation from one side of the Commonwealth to the other that is faster than ground transportation. The public expects elected officials to be present for emergencies, important announcements, and events, and commercial flights may not meet travel-time constraints. Travel teams often need to conduct sensitive business while traveling, which precludes using commercial airlines. Even in non-emergency situations, elected officials may need to be in Pittsburgh for a morning event and back in Harrisburg for an afternoon event. Law enforcement agencies, such as the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), sometimes need to interview potential suspects who were apprehended in other states. Legal provisions may limit how long investigators can hold potential suspects without formal charges, and state-owned aircraft can ensure investigators can interview them in other states in a timely manner. Finally, when security or threat levels are elevated, highly visible state officials may find it challenging to travel safely on commercial aircraft.

While Pennsylvania benefits from maintaining some state-owned aircraft, the Commonwealth should periodically review regulations and the use of state-owned aircraft and aviation assets to ensure it follows best practices, minimizes costs, and provides adequate service delivery to departments.

As of October 1, 2026, the Commonwealth owns five planes and five helicopters, managed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), PSP, and OAG.[4] These three agencies have different operational needs, leading to different management practices. In response, the Senate passed Senate Resolution (SR) 89 of 2025, Printer's No. 683, directing the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) to study State-owned aircraft and aviation assets and provide findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. The directives of the resolution requested:

(1) a review of the Commonwealth's current airplanes, helicopters, hangars, and pilots;

(2) an examination of applicable State agencies' aircraft needs and operational requirements, Federal regulatory aircraft reporting requirements, aircraft usage, operational procedures, training programs, and insurance policies;

(3) an analysis of state aircraft operations, maintenance, and storage costs;

(4) a cost-benefit evaluation of options the State or agencies may have in lieu of owning aviation assets; and

[4] On August 19, 2026, a small Cessna 150 airplane had a mid-air collision with one of six PSP-owned helicopters, and the helicopter was not repairable. As of October 5, 2026, PSP staff have no timeline for its replacement. However, parts from the damaged helicopter should be salvageable once the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) completes its investigation.

(5) potential recommendations to increase aviation efficiency and operation, and options to reduce aviation costs to the Commonwealth.

Many state agencies own unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly called drones.[5] Commission staff interpreted SR89's report as focusing only on manned aircraft for the following three reasons:

(1) The first whereas clause of SR 89 only mentions PennDOT, OAG, and PSP (the only departments with manned aircraft), and there are other agencies with UAVs.

(2) The second resolved clause within SR 89 focuses on airplanes, helicopters, hangars, and pilots (all items surrounding manned aircraft).

(3) Nowhere in SR 89 is there mention of drones or UAVs.

As a result, this report focuses only on agencies with manned aircraft. For those agencies, drones may be briefly noted, but not in great detail. Drones operated outside PennDOT, OAG, and PSP are not covered in this report.

This report also excludes the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA). While the DMVA oversees and supports members of the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG), including the Air National Guard (ANG), the U.S. Federal National Guard Bureau pays for and owns the ANG aircraft. As such, this report does not include these aircraft.

Commission staff contacted several state agencies and other stakeholders to solicit any insights, data, or recommendations for consideration. The Commission thanks staff at PennDOT, PSP, and OAG for their invaluable assistance in this research. Additionally, JSGC thanks the National Council of State Legislators (NCSL) for its assistance with researching state aviation assets in other states.

[5] For background on Pennsylvania government and UAVs, see the Joint State Government Commission 2017 report, *Unmanned Aircraft Systems in Pennsylvania*, https://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/publications.cfm?JSPU_PUBLN_ID=455.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Table A1 lists all aircraft currently owned by the Commonwealth as of October 1, 2026, which includes five airplanes and five helicopters.[6]

Table A1
Current Commonwealth Aircraft and Purchase Price and Year

Agency	Aircraft	Purchase Price (Year)
PennDOT	2019 King Air 350i (airplane)	$6,045,000 (2019)
PSP	Three 2013 Bell 407 GX (helicopters)	$4,495,000 each (2013)
PSP	Two 2014 Bell 407 GX (helicopters)[1]	$4,495,000 each (2014)
PSP	2015 Pilatus PC-12/47E (airplane)	$6,368,857 (2015)
PSP	2019 Cessna Grand Caravan EX, 208B (airplane)	$4,823,226 (2020)
PSP	2022 Beechcraft B300 King Air 360 (airplane)	$9,400,000 (2022)
OAG	2022 C208B Cessna Grand Caravan EX (airplane)	$6,537,062 (2021)[2]

Notes: PennDOT stands for Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, PSP stands for Pennsylvania State Police, and OAG stands for Office of the Attorney General.

[1] On August 19, 2026, one of three 2014 Bell 407 GX helicopters was involved in a mid-air collision with a small Cessna 150 airplane, and the helicopter is not repairable. As of October 5, 2026, PSP staff have no timeline for replacement. However, PSP staff indicated they expect to salvage parts and mission equipment from the wreckage once the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) releases it after its investigation.
[2] The OAG plane purchase price includes a $350,000 trade-in credit for a 2012 GIPPSAERO GA8 Airvan.

Source: Various emails from PennDOT, PSP, and OAG. The next chapter details these sources.

Table A2 details the Commonwealth's total aviation storage and operational costs by agency. This excludes capital costs such as airplane purchases and major upgrades to hangar facilities.

[6] Pennsylvania State Police expects to purchase a 2026 Beechcraft B300 King Air 360 airplane in mid-November 2026 that is not included in this count or shown in Table A2. Source: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachments to Commission staff, November 9, 2026.

Table A2
Total Operating and Storage Costs of Aviation Units
by Fiscal Year ($000s)

Agency	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
PennDOT	$652	$1,058	$969	$987	$1,099
PSP	8,438	9,700	9,781	11,297	12,522
OAG	297	570	1,148	1,242	1,344
Total	**9,387**	**11,328**	**11,898**	**13,527**	**14,964**

Note: PennDOT totals include personnel estimates by JSGC staff.

Source: Various emails from PennDOT, PSP, and OAG. The next chapter details these sources.

Table A3 lists the hangars the Commonwealth is currently leasing and the amount spent on lease payments in FY 2025-26.

Table A3
Current Aircraft Hangars
Leased by Commonwealth Agencies
and FY 25-26 Annual Lease Payments

Agency	Aviation Cost Center	FY 25-26
PSP	Capital City Airport, New Cumberland	$248,338
PSP	Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport, Avoca	181,061
PennDOT	Capital City Airport, New Cumberland	131,808
PSP	Arnold Palmer Regional Airport, Latrobe	98,653
PSP	Altoona-Blair County Airport, Martinsburg	93,201
OAG	Capital City Airport, New Cumberland	90,480
PSP	Reading Regional Airport, Reading	67,970
PSP	Venango Regional Airport, Franklin	59,394
Total Hangar Lease Payments		**970,904**

Note: For PSP, the values represent "Real Estate" operational expenses by Aviation Cost Center, of which leased costs make up the majority.

Source: Various emails from PennDOT, PSP, and OAG. The next chapter details these sources.

Abbreviated Findings and Recommendations

Below is a summary of findings and recommendations. The full discussion of the findings is in the "Conclusion and Findings Chapter."

- Public transparency of the use of the state plane could be increased.
- Clarification on how much agencies should be charged for the use of the state plane may be needed.
- Agencies should reimburse PSP if the PSP plane is used instead of the PennDOT state plane.
- All three agencies (PennDOT, PSP and OAG) noted different reasons why leasing or sharing of aircraft with outside organizations would not be a viable alternative or would not save money.
- Any passenger not covered by the Commonwealth's blanket travel accident policy should be required to sign a waiver to limit the Commonwealth's liability in the event of an aircraft accident.
- PennDOT, PSP, and policymakers should review the feasibility of moving the state plane and the mission of the state plane under PSP jurisdiction.

COMMONWEALTH CURRENT AIR ASSETS AND COSTS

Senate Resolution 89 asks the Joint State Government Commission to include a "review of each department's current air assets, including airplanes, helicopters, hangars, and pilots," as well as an assessment of overall costs to taxpayers. This chapter includes details for the agencies that currently have these air assets, including the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). A later chapter reviews the policies and regulations governing the aircraft, including typical uses.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Current Aircraft[7]

PennDOT purchased a 2019 King Air 350i in 2019 for $6.045 million, with a $2.418 million down payment and a 10-year, no-interest loan, with an annual payment of $363,000 due each July. (See Figure B1 on next page.) This airplane replaced a 20-year-old 1999 King Air 350 that PennDOT sold for $950,000 and that needed approximately $1.5 million in maintenance.[8]

[7] As noted in the Introduction of this report, unmanned aircraft are not the focus of this report and are generally not included in the costs of aviation assets. However, PennDOT also owns 38 drones that are used for, but not limited to, "construction monitoring, test applications, removing graffiti, validating stockpile quantities, validating landside quantities, and project planning."[7] Source: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 24, 2026.

[8] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

Figure B1
2019 King Air 350i



Source: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

Storage Hangar Lease

The 2019 King Air 350i is stored in a leased hangar at the Capital City Airport in Fairview Township, York County. The current lease term is a one-year lease from January 1, 2026 to January 1, 2027 with a one-year renewal option.[9] Table B1 details the lease costs over the last five fiscal years.

Table B1
PennDOT Storage Hangar Lease at the Capital City Airport
by Fiscal Year

FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
$73,565	$73,296	$102,332	$129,202	$131,808

Source: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026.

[9] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

Aircraft Personnel

PennDOT staff indicated that PennDOT's Flight Operations Division includes four pilots (including one chief pilot) and a tradesman helper.[10] Table B2 details the personnel costs (including wages, benefits, etc.) of PennDOT's entire Bureau of Aviation by fiscal year, of which the Flight Operations Division is a part. PennDOT noted that it cannot comprehensively break out costs for Flight Operations Division personnel only.[11] However, using publicly available salary data for PennDOT pilots and the median annual salary of a PennDOT tradesman helper, JSGC staff roughly estimated the Flight Operations Division Personnel Costs in Table B2.[12] The estimate assumes that salary is 50 percent of personnel costs and should only be viewed as a rough estimate.

Table B2
PennDOT Bureau of Aviation
Personnel Costs
by Fiscal Year

Personnel	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
Bureau Total	$2,464,713	$2,376,905	$2,244,679	$2,467,539	$2,553,635
Flight Operations Division Est.	551,000	572,000	608,000	626,000	809,000

Note: The Bureau Total includes the actual wages and benefits for the entire Bureau of Aviation, of which the Flight Operations Division is just a part. JSGC staff estimated the total personnel costs for all pilots and one tradesman helper at PennDOT (labeled as "Flight Operations Division Est.").

Sources: Bureau Total: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026. Flight Operations Division Estimate: Calculated by JSGC staff using data from www.pennwatch.pa.gov.

Aircraft Fuel

Table B3 below details the aircraft (jet) fuel costs PennDOT spent for the 2019 King Air 350i. Over the past five years, PennDOT spent $531,292 on jet fuel and flew 860.1 flight hours, defined as the elapsed time from when the aircraft door closes until it opens at the destination.[13] Jet fuel cost per flight hour over the last five years was roughly $618. Over the last four years, the cost per flight hour is $721, with higher amounts in more recent years, likely due to higher jet fuel prices.

[10] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.
[11] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026.
[12] JSGC staff used the annual salary data of all pilots and the median salary of one tradesman helper provided on www.pennwatchpa.gov as of June 15th in each fiscal year.
[13] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

Table B3
PennDOT's Aircraft Fuel Costs for the 2019 King Air 350i
by Fiscal Year

King Air 350i	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	5-Year Total
Jet Fuel	$18,702	$65,338	$235,395	$146,496	$65,461	$531,392
Flight Hours	148.6	176.0	255.9	196.1	83.5	860.1
Cost/Flight Hour	$126	$371	$920	$747	$784	$618

Sources: Jet Fuel: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026; Flight Hours: "State Flight Logs," *PennDOT*, accessed October 23, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/programs-and-doing-business/aviation/state-flight-logs; Cost/Flight Hour: JSGC staff calculations.

Aircraft Maintenance

Table B4 below summarizes PennDOT's contracted maintenance costs (work not completed by PennDOT staff) for the 2019 King Air 350i by fiscal year. The higher cost in FY 2022-23 was primarily due to a $328,362 contract with Textron Systems to remove and install a new propeller and right-side engine.[14] From FY 2021-22 through FY 2025-26, the total contracted maintenance costs were $555,724. Over the same time, the plane logged 860.1 flight hours for an average outside maintenance cost of $646 per flight hour.[15] Excluding FY 2021-22, outside maintenance cost per flight hour was $768 from FY 2022-23 through FY 2025-26.

Table B4
PennDOT's Aircraft Maintenance for the 2019 King Air 350i
by Fiscal Year

FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	5-Year Total
$9,013	$347,767	$23,131	$85,649	$90,164	$555,724

Source: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026.

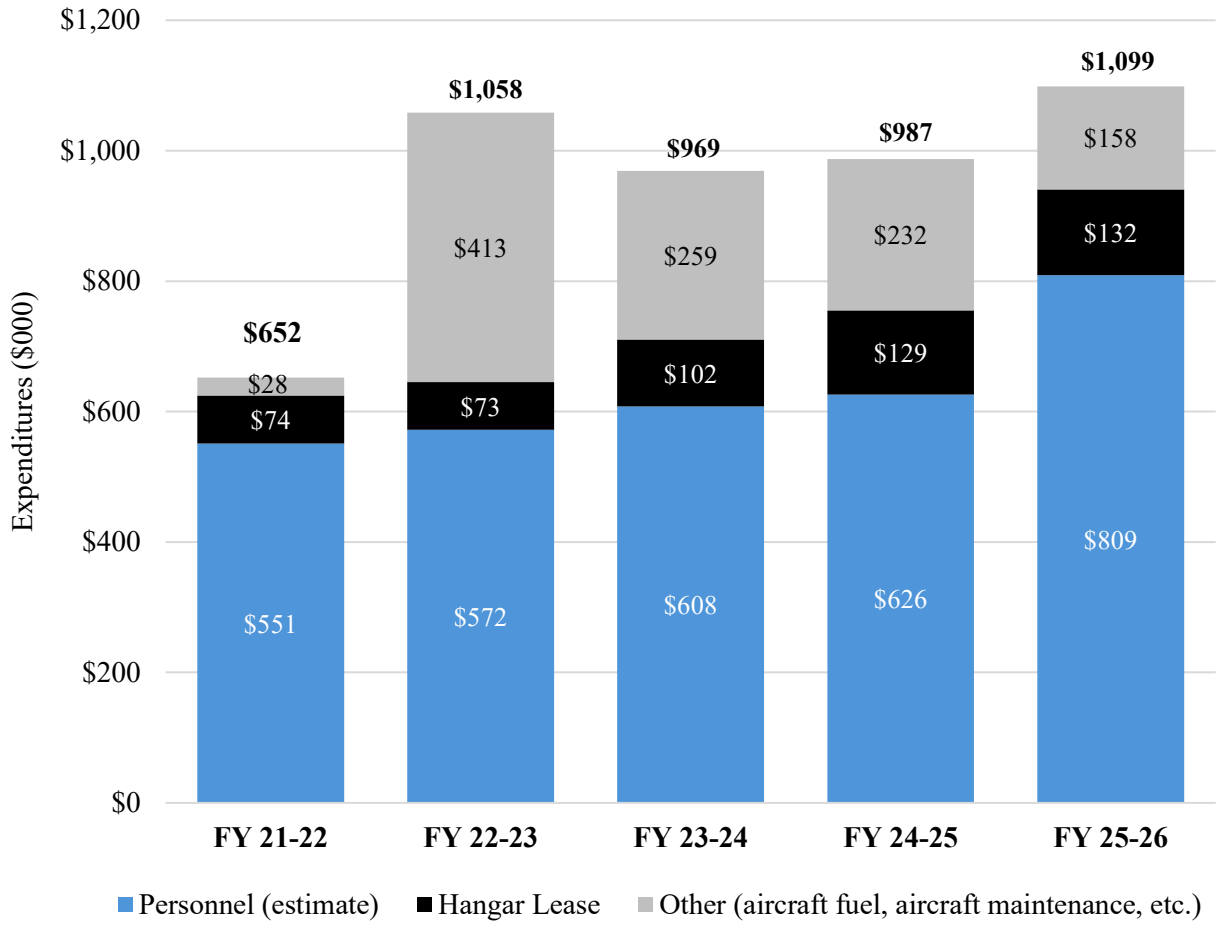
Total Aircraft Operational and Storage Costs

Figure B2 shows an estimated total PennDOT operational and storage expenditures for the 2019 King Air 350i aircraft, excluding capital expenses such as the aircraft purchase price and minor costs such as insurance. The high operational costs in FY 2022-23 are largely due to a $328,362 contracted cost for a new right engine replacement (included in "other costs," gray

[14] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026.
[15] Flight Hours: "State Flight Logs," *PennDOT*, accessed October 23, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/programs-and-doing-business/aviation/state-flight-logs.

box).[16] The large increase in estimated personnel costs in FY 2025-26 reflects adding a pilot in the second half of FY 2024-25.[17]

Figure B2
Estimated PennDOT Flight Operations Division
Expenditures to Operate and Store Aircraft
by Fiscal Year
(excludes capital expenses)



Notes: Flight operations personnel costs are JSGC staff calculations based on the salary of all pilots and the median salary of one tradesman helper provided on www.pennwatch.pa.gov as of June 15th in each fiscal year and assume that salary is 50 percent of all personnel costs.

Source: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026. Personnel estimates are calculated by JSGC staff.

[16] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026.

[17] Flight operations personnel costs are JSGC staff calculations based on the salary of all pilots and the median salary of one tradesman helper provided on www.pennwatchpa.gov as of June 15th in each fiscal year and assumes that salary is 50 percent of all personnel costs.

Pennsylvania State Police

Current Aircraft

As detailed in Table B5, as of October 1, 2026, PSP owns three airplanes, three 2013 Bell 407 helicopters, and two 2014 Bell 407 helicopters.[18] On August 19, 2026, a small Cessna 150 airplane collided with one of the three 2014 Bell 407 helicopters, and the helicopter is not repairable. As of October 5, 2026, PSP staff have no timeline for replacement. However, PSP staff indicated they expect to salvage parts and mission equipment from the wreckage once the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) releases it after its investigation. Table B5 below provides a bit more detail on each, and Figure B3 includes sample pictures of various aircraft.

Table B5
PSP Current Aircraft and Purchase Price and Year

Aircraft	Purchase Price (and Year)
Three 2013 Bell 407 GX (helicopters)	$4,495,000 each (2013)
Two 2014 Bell 407 GX (helicopters)[1]	$4,495,000 each (2014)
2015 Pilatus PC-12/47E (airplane)	$6,368,857 (2015)
2019 Cessna Grand Caravan EX, 208B (airplane)	$4,823,226 (2020)
2022 Beechcraft B300 King Air 360 (airplane)	$9,400,000 (2022)

Note: [1] On August 19, 2026, a small Cessna 150 airplane collided with one of three 2014 Bell 407 GX helicopters, and the helicopter was not repairable. As of October 5, 2026, PSP staff have no timeline for replacement. However, PSP staff indicated they expect to salvage parts and mission equipment from the wreckage once the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) releases it after its investigation.

Source: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachments to Commission staff, on July 13, 2026 and October 5, 2026.

[18] Pennsylvania State Police expects to purchase a 2026 Beechcraft B300 King Air 360 airplane in mid-November 2026 that is not included in this count or shown in Table B5. Source: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachments to Commission staff, November 9, 2026.

Figure B3
Pictures of Various PSP Current Aircraft



Source: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachments to Commission staff, July 13, 2026.

Storage Hangar Lease

The PSP has seven hangars in six locations throughout the Commonwealth. As Table B6 illustrates, total current monthly lease costs as of October 2026 are $59,155, or $709,860 per year, with the Capital City Airport and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport hangars being the costliest. Table B7 summarizes the real estate costs for the PSP Bureau of Emergency and Special Operations, Aviation Section cost centers. The cost centers largely follow the Aviation Patrol Units and hangar locations. The vast majority of the yearly real estate costs are hangar lease payments. Real estate costs have increased modestly (4.6 percent) since FY 2021-22.

Table B6
PSP Hangar Locations, Lease Dates, and Current Monthly Costs

Aviation Patrol Unit	Hangar Location	Original Lease Start	Current Lease End	Current Cost/Month
1	Reading Regional Airport, Reading	10/01/1992	11/30/2028	$5,664
2	Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport, Avoca	5/1/2017	4/30/2032	13,948
HQ	Capital City Airport, New Cumberland	4/15/1996	03/16/2031	17,068
3	Capital City Airport, New Cumberland	5/1/2001	4/30/2029	3,283
4	Altoona-Blair County Airport, Martinsburg	10/01/2006	07/31/2028	7,767
5	Arnold Palmer Regional Airport, Latrobe	6/1/2004	5/31/2029	5,525
6	Venango Regional Airport, Franklin	5/1/2001	4/30/2031	5,900
Current Monthly Total				**59,155**
Implied 12-month (annual) Total				**709,860**

Sources: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachments to Commission staff, July 13, 2026 and October 5, 2026, and "Aviation," *PSP*, accessed August 18, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/psp/programs/law-enforcement-services/aviation.

Table B7
PSP Aviation Total Real Estate (Mostly Lease) Costs by Fiscal Year

Aviation Cost Center	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
Section (Headquarters)	$194,601	$166,736	$204,816	$204,816	$207,777
Avoca (APU 2)	171,431	174,296	177,046	178,759	181,061
Latrobe (APU 5)	88,828	90,209	92,020	97,472	98,653
Altoona (APU 4)	88,761	88,761	93,201	93,201	93,201
Reading (APU 1)	67,970	67,970	67,970	67,970	67,970
Franklin (APU 6)	59,077	59,171	59,262	59,318	59,394
Harrisburg (APU 3)	45,356	46,073	41,819	39,708	40,561
Total Aviation	**716,023**	**693,215**	**736,134**	**741,245**	**748,616**

Note: These values represent the "Real Estate" operational expenses by Aviation Cost Center by fiscal year. The Aviation Cost Centers correspond to an Aviation Patrol Unit (APU) in Table B6.

Sources: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, October 5, October 15, 2026, and October 26, 2026.

Aircraft Personnel

At a May 11, 2026 meeting with PSP and JSGC staff, JSGC staff asked how many pilots, crewmembers, and maintenance aircraft staff PSP employs. PSP staff responded that PSP currently has 22 helicopter pilots and 7 fixed-wing airplane pilots stationed at hangars statewide. All pilots must hold at least a private pilot license to apply for a pilot position, and all have completed cadet training to become PSP troopers. In addition, PSP also has five full-time aviation maintenance staff who are civilian PSP employees. PSP provided its total personnel costs by Aviation Cost Center. This includes only PSP employee costs and excludes the use of private vendors for maintenance needs beyond what the five maintenance staff handle.

Table B8 details the PSP-provided total personnel costs for each aviation cost center by fiscal year. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26, Aviation Personnel Services for PSP increased 52 percent.[19] This growth rate exceeds the Consumer Price Index (All Urban Consumers), CPI-U (i.e., inflation), for Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, which grew 19 percent over the same period.[20] The additional growth above inflation mostly reflects a larger filled staff complement over the five years. Between the first pay period in FY 2021-22 (July 2021) and the first pay period in FY 2025-26 (July 2025), the number of filled, full-time equivalent PSP aviation staff positions increased from 27 to 33, a 22 percent increase.[21] This growth in complement resulted from adding three positions and having three fewer vacancies between July 2021 and July 2025.[22]

[19] Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, October 5, 2026.
[20] "Databases, Tables & Calculations by Subject, Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD, All items," *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, accessed October 13, 2026, https://www.bls.gov/data/home.htm.
[21] Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, October 5, 2026.
[22] *Ibid.*

Table B8
PSP Aviation Personnel Services
by Fiscal Year

Aviation Cost Center	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
Section (HQ)	$969,216	$1,156,709	$1,181,808	$1,147,867	$1,345,052
Maintenance	580,183	632,242	689,924	595,474	576,490
Altoona	668,611	576,217	123,694	0	0
Avoca	648,903	724,903	763,281	895,758	1,095,613
Franklin	615,187	956,684	937,029	963,137	1,133,485
Harrisburg	587,306	887,443	1,416,063	2,451,693	3,211,556
Latrobe	1,116,349	1,308,560	1,336,331	1,035,986	1,120,381
Reading	996,526	1,169,814	942,955	993,477	929,221
Total Aviation	**6,182,280**	**7,412,571**	**7,391,086**	**8,083,392**	**9,411,797**

Note: These values represent all personnel expenses by Aviation Cost Center by fiscal year, including wages and salaries, employer payroll taxes, and employee benefits. Section (HQ) contains the Aviation & Special Services Nonspecified and Aviation Section Cost Centers.

Sources: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, October 15, 2026 and November 9, 2026.

Aircraft Fuel

Table B9 shows the total aircraft fuel PSP used by fiscal year. Overall fuel costs increased 67 percent from FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26, which PSP staff attribute to increased missions and higher aircraft fuel prices.[23]

Table B9
PSP Aircraft Fuel Costs
by Fiscal Year

FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
$422,670	$555,940	$564,411	$573,780	$704,110

Source: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, October 26, 2026.

[23] Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email to Commission staff, October 26, 2026.

Aircraft and Hangar Contracted Maintenance

Table B10 details the PSP Contracted Maintenance (excluding electronic data processing equipment). This excludes the personnel costs for the maintenance aviation cost center, which are included in Table B8 earlier in this section.

Table B10
PSP Contracted Maintenance
by Fiscal Year

FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
$636,716	$781,516	$588,490	$813,071	$426,524

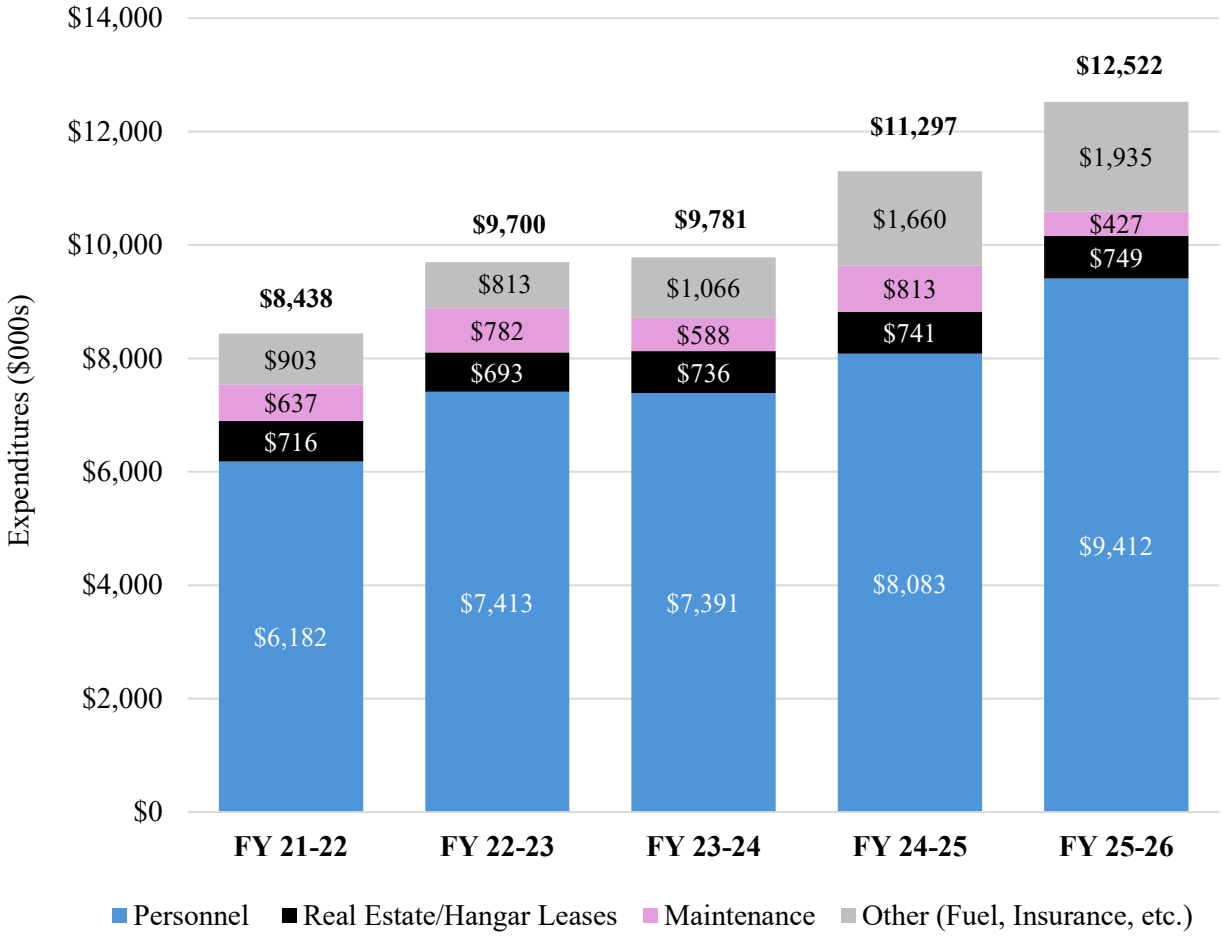
Note: These values represent the sum of actual expenditures and commitments of operational expenses with a commitment item of Contracted Maintenance-Non-Electronic Data Processing.

Source: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, October 15, 2026.

Total Aircraft Costs

In total, roughly 75 percent of PSP aviation expenditures by fiscal year are personnel (blue bar in Figure B4). The black bar in the figure is real estate (mostly lease) costs. The pink bar is the contracted maintenance. The gray bar includes all other expenditures.

Figure B4
PSP Aviation Operational Expenditures
by Fiscal Year
(excludes capital expenses)



Note: PSP aviation expenditures include actual expenses by fiscal year for all Aviation Cost Centers and fuel costs billed to field operations or a higher-level Bureau Cost Center.

Sources: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, October 15, 2026 and October 26, 2026.

Current Aircraft

The OAG currently owns a 2022 C208B Cessna Grand Caravan EX, purchased in late 2021 for $6.537 million, including a $350,000 trade-in credit for a 2012 GIPPSAERO GA8 Airvan.[24,25] The capital cost of the aircraft purchase was funded by non-appropriated funds, including the Seized/Forfeited State Court Awards Fund (69% of total, $4,537,000), the Seized/Forfeited Property United States Department of Justice Fund (23%, $1,500,000), and the Seized/Forfeited Property Homeland Security Fund (8%, $500,000).[26]

Storage Hangar Lease

The OAG leases a hangar at Capital City Airport in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania. Monthly payments are $7,594 and are adjusted annually for inflation, up to a maximum of 5 percent above last year's lease costs. In addition to storage space for the aircraft and equipment, the hangar lease includes an office, a restroom, and a conference room. The lease runs from February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2033. In addition to operational expenses (lease payments), there were capital expenses (primarily in FY 2022-23) to build and improve the leased space. Table B11 below details the annual hangar lease and capital improvements to the leased space.

Table B11
OAG Aviation Hangar Rent/Lease and Capital Improvement Costs by Fiscal Year

	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
Hangar Lease	$34,200	$65,214	$88,515	$89,340	$90,480
Capital Improvements	0	438,000	12,234	21,910	0
Total	**34,200**	**503,214**	**100,749**	**111,250**	**90,480**

Source: Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.

Aircraft Personnel

The OAG Aviation Unit is part of the Bureau of Investigative Services and includes two full-time pilots, four part-time pilots, one annuitant pilot, one part-time tactical flight officer (TFO), and one aviation maintenance manager. Table B12 shows the Aviation Unit's total personnel costs.

[24] Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.
[25] The OAG did not supply a picture of their aircraft. However, it looks similar to PSP's Cessna Grand Caravan EX 208B pictured earlier in this chapter.
[26] Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.

Personnel costs increased significantly from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24 because the unit transitioned from the prior plane (Airvan) to the new plane (Caravan) and added part-time pilots, a mechanic, and a tactical flight officer.[27] The Airvan previously flew approximately 280 flight hours per year. Due to advances in technology and the Caravan's success, mission requests increased, and the Caravan now flies approximately 1,000 flight hours per year.[28] Additionally, hourly pilot compensation was adjusted beginning in September 2024 to compete with other agencies within the Commonwealth and across the country.[29]

Table B12
OAG Aviation Unit Personnel Costs
by Fiscal Year

FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
$162,485	$272,444	$493,926	$542,392	$535,368

Source: Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.

Aircraft Fuel

Table B13 provides the total cost of aircraft fuel used by OAG by fiscal year. From FY 2021-22 through FY 2025-26, the fuel costs increased nearly 500 percent. The hefty increase in fuel costs over the last five years was due to the following reasons.

- In FY 2021-22, the prior airplane was out of service due to a series of maintenance events, leading to low flight-hour usage.
- The new plane operations began in 2023, and its fuel type (Jet-A fuel) was more expensive per gallon than the older plane's fuel type (100LL fuel).
- The OAG Aviation unit increased flight hours per year from approximately 280 to 1,000 flight hours over the last five years.[30]

Table B13
OAG Aircraft Fuel Costs
by Fiscal Year

FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
$37,692	$92,299	$234,736	$263,321	$224,479

Source: Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.

[27] Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, October 7, 2026.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*

Aircraft and Hangar Equipment and Maintenance

Table B14 details equipment and maintenance costs by fiscal year. This excludes the OAG personnel costs for maintenance, which are included in Table B12 earlier in this section. These costs vary by year and total nearly $610,000 over the past five years. In FY 2025-26, a large portion of the $171,696 in Aircraft Equipment and Maintenance was due to a $129,695 purchase for a portable receive site.[31]

Table B14
OAG Equipment and Maintenance
by Fiscal Year

Equipment & Maintenance	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26
Aircraft	$49,433	$28,044	$0	$56,829	$171,696
Non-Aircraft	0	46,915	88,029	101,682	66,978
Total	**49,433**	**74,959**	**88,029**	**158,512**	**238,675**

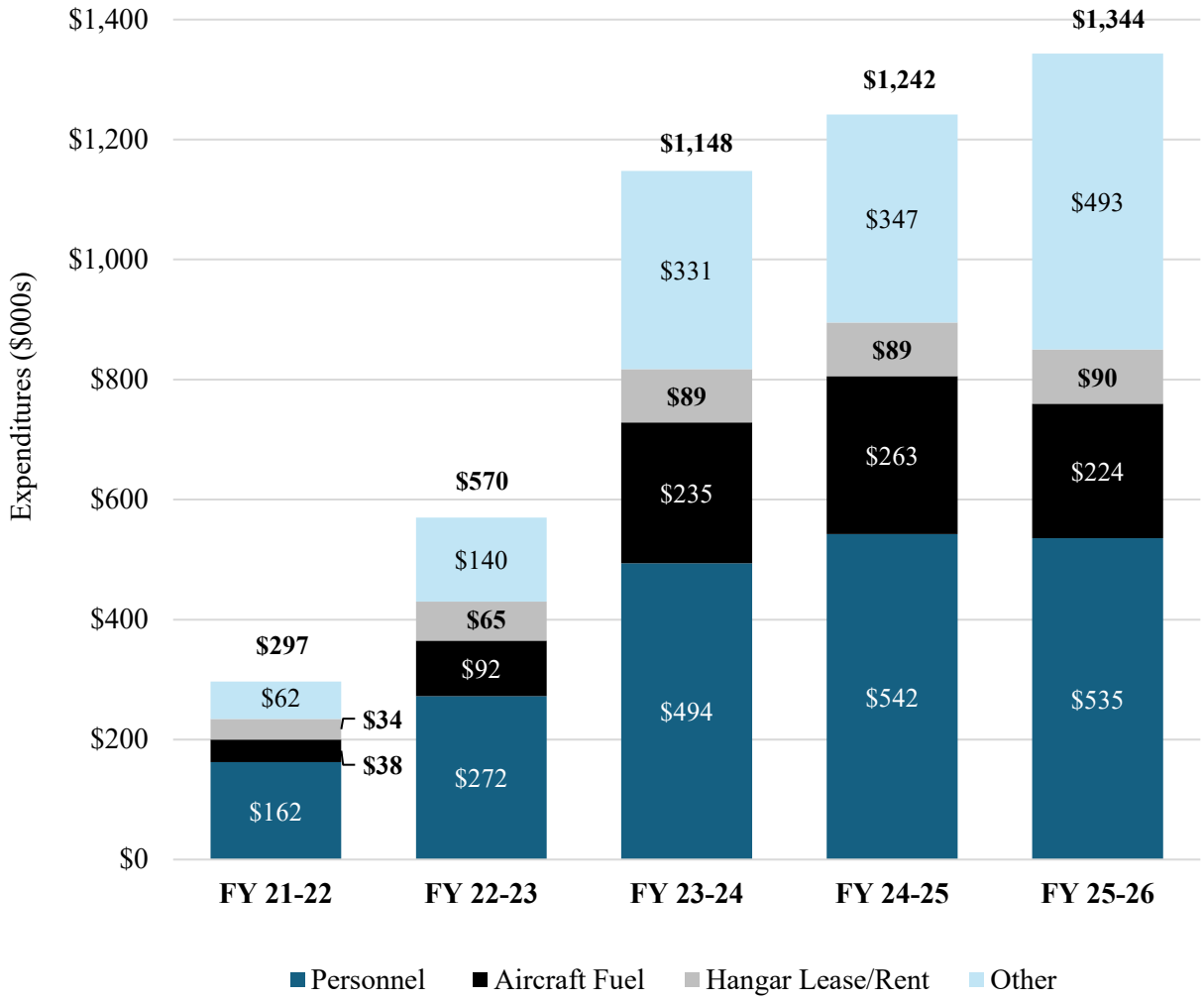
Source: Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.

Total Aircraft Costs

Figure B5 (next page) summarizes the total Pennsylvania OAG aviation operation expenditures by fiscal year. Over the last three fiscal years, personnel expenses comprise 42 percent of all operational expenditures (dark blue bars in the figure). During the same three-year period, fuel for the aircraft accounted for slightly less than 20 percent (black bars), and the hangar lease accounted for 7 percent (gray bars) of operational costs. Other expenditures (light blue bars) comprise the remainder of costs and include maintenance, smaller equipment purchases, insurance, utilities, and other minor expenses.

[31] The Commonwealth has four permanent receive sites that provide real-time video downlinks to ground agents from aviation assets. All of these receive sites required equipment and software updates totaling over $300,000 for each site. The OAG decided to purchase their own portable receive site at a fraction of the cost of updating all the existing Commonwealth receive sites. This portable option can be transported anywhere in the Commonwealth as needed. Source: Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, October 7, 2026.

Figure B5
OAG Aviation Unit Operating Expenditures
by Fiscal Year
(excludes capital expenses)



Note: This figure excludes capital costs, including the purchase of the 2022 Cessna C208B Cessna Grand Caravan EX in FY 21-22 ($6,537,062) and the upgrades/construction costs to the Capital City Airport hangar in FY 2022-23 ($438,000).

Source: Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.

Commonwealth Aircraft Insurance

Insurance for all Commonwealth aircraft is limited to a blanket travel accident policy for aircraft owned and operated by the Commonwealth. This policy provides accidental death and dismemberment, emergency medical benefits and evacuation benefits, and repatriation of remains benefits to passengers, pilots, and crew members up to $1,000,000 per covered accident. The initial premium rate is $23,564 per policy term, currently covering July 1, 2025 to July 1, 2028.[32] PennDOT, PSP, and OAG split the cost. Further discussion of this insurance is included in the chapter titled "Relevant Commonwealth Agency Rules and Regulations."

[32] Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, July 13, 2026 and Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATORY AND PENNSYLVANIA FLIGHT GOVERNANCE

Federal Statutory Framework: The Foundation of Aviation Law/The FAA's Statutory Foundation and Core Authority

Federal oversight of national airspace and civil aviation rests within the statutory authority of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), codified across Titles 14 and 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The FAA's authority derives from 49 U.S.C. § 40103, which vests the Administrator of the FAA with the power to develop plans and policy for the use of the navigable airspace and to assign by regulation or order the use of the airspace necessary to ensure the safety of aircraft and the efficient use of airspace.[33]

The Administrator may modify or revoke any such assignment when required in the public interest.[34] The FAA is also directed to prescribe air traffic regulations on the flight of aircraft, including regulations on safe altitudes, for the purpose of using the navigable airspace efficiently.[35] The broader policy framework under 49 U.S.C. § 40101 requires the Administrator to consider the requirements of national defense, commercial and general aviation, and the public right of freedom of transit through the navigable airspace.[36]

Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), commonly known as the Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs), is the primary regulatory framework disseminated by the FAA under the authority granted by the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 (Act).[37] These regulations comprehensively cover all aspects of civil aviation safety, including aircraft manufacture, operation, maintenance, pilot certification, air traffic management, and airport operations.[38] The FAA Administrator has the authority to issue, amend, and rescind these regulations pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act and courts typically defer to the FAA's expertise in their application.[39] The FARs possess the force of law and pervasively regulate aviation to ensure uniformity and safety across the nation.[40]

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[33] 49 U.S.C. § 40103.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] 49 U.S.C. § 40101.
[37] *Sikkelee v. Precision Airmotive Corp.*, 822 F.3d 680 (3d Cir. 2016).
[38] 49 U.S.C. § 44701.
[39] *Elassaad v. Independence Air, Inc.*, 613 F.3d 119 (3d Cir. 2010); *Sikkelee*, 822 F.3d at 685.
[40] *Elassaad*, 613 F.3d at 123.

Title 49 of the CFR governs broad transportation policy and security, while Title 14 governs the technical operational rules of aeronautics and space;[41] together, they form the dual regulatory backbone of federal aviation law. Under the statutes codified at 49 U.S.C., federal authority over aviation is sweeping, and Pennsylvania state law is substantially preempted in areas touching air safety, airspace, airline pricing, and airport development.[42]

Aircraft Registration and Airworthiness Certification

All aircraft operating in the United States, including those based in Pennsylvania, must be registered and hold valid airworthiness certificates.[43] The Act mandates a comprehensive regulatory scheme, including certification processes such as type certificates, production certificates, and airworthiness certificates, to ensure uniform safety standards.[44] The FAA's role extends to disseminating and enforcing regulations covering manufacture, operation, maintenance, air traffic control, and facilitating national uniformity in aviation safety regulation.[45]

General Aviation Operations

Rather than applying uniform standards to all flight operations, federal law places compliance burdens into distinct operational "Parts" based on payload capacity, seating, and the presence of commercial compensation. At the base of the federal regulatory pyramid lies 14 CFR Part 91, which establishes the universal baseline of flight rules, safety mandates, pilot responsibilities, preflight requirements, visual flight rules (VFR) weather minimums, careless or reckless operation prohibitions, and maintenance procedures applicable to every civil aircraft operating in the United States.[46] Private pilots, corporate flight departments, and state government entities operating for internal administrative transportation function primarily under this tier.[47] Because Part 91 assumes noncommercial usage, it imposes fewer administrative hurdles regarding air carrier certification, operating certificates, and rigid crew rest configurations compared to commercial counterparts.[48]

14 C.F.R. Part 91 establishes general operating and flight rules applicable to all civil aircraft operations in the United States, including those in Pennsylvania.[49] Part 91 also contains Subpart F, which governs large airplanes and turbine-powered multiengine aircraft when not involved in common carriage, essentially private corporate operations that would otherwise fall under Parts 121, 125, 135, or 137 if they were engaged in commercial service.[50]

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[41] 49 U.S.C.; 14 U.S.C.A.
[42] *See Morales v. Trans World Airlines, Inc.*, 504 U.S. 374, 112 S. Ct. 2031, 119 L. Ed. 2d 157 (1992) (Airline Deregulation Act, 49 U.S.C. § 41713(b), preempts any state law, regulation, or provision related to the prices, routes, or services of any airline);
[43] 49 U.S.C. § 44103.
[44] 49 U.S.C. § 44701.
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] 14 C.F.R. § 91.3; 14 C.F.R. § 91.103; 14 C.F.R. § 91.155.
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] *Ibid*.
[49] 14 C.F.R. § 91.3; 14 C.F.R. § 91.13.
[50] 14 C.F.R. § 91.501.

Under 14 C.F.R. § 91.3, the pilot of an aircraft is directly responsible for the operation of that aircraft.[51] Critically, 14 C.F.R. § 91.13 prohibits any person from operating an aircraft in a careless or reckless manner so as to endanger the life or property of another.[52]

Commercial and Large Aircraft Operations

Federal regulatory framework divides aviation operations into distinct categories based on the type of operation and aircraft size, with each governed by different parts of 14 C.F.R.

When flight operations cross into commercial service, supplementary regulations apply on top of Part 91's foundation, such as:

- **14 CFR Part 135**: Governs commercial charter and commuter services. It establishes rigorous oversight for nonscheduled, on demand passenger or cargo flights operated for compensation, including air taxi services and charter flights.[53] These operations require an Operating Certificate and must comply with more stringent requirements than Part 91, including specific exit seating rules and additional emergency equipment for aircraft with more than 19 passenger seats.[54] Part 135 operators conducting scheduled passenger service with certain aircraft may be required to transition to Part 121 operations.[55]

- **14 CFR Part 125**: Targets noncommercial operations of large aircraft, specifically those carrying a payload capacity of 6,000 pounds or more, or configured with 20 or more passenger seats.[56] It forces large nonairline operators to meet enhanced safety and operational standards similar to commercial lines without requiring full air carrier status.[57] This part fills the regulatory gap for large aircraft operations that don't qualify as common carriage under Parts 121 or 135, imposing requirements such as mandatory flight attendants for aircraft with more than 19 passengers, passenger briefing requirements, and emergency evacuation demonstrations for aircraft with more than 44 passengers.[58]

- **14 CFR Part 121**: Represents the strictest standard in federal aviation law, governing scheduled major and regional air carriers. In addition, it applies to domestic, flag, and supplemental air carrier operations.[59] Operators under Part 121 must hold an Air Carrier Certificate issued under 14 C.F.R. Part 119, which establishes the certification requirements for both Part 121 and Part 135 operators.[60] Part 119 prohibits operating under Parts 121 or 135 without proper certification and operations specifications.[61]

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[51] 14 C.F.R. § 91.3.
[52] 14 C.F.R. § 91.13.
[53] 14 C.F.R. § 135.2.
[54] 14 C.F.R. § 135.129; 14 C.F.R. § 135.178.
[55] 14 C.F.R. § 135.2.
[56] 14 C.F.R. § 125.269; 14 C.F.R. § 125.327; 14 C.F.R. § 125.207.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] 14 C.F.R. § 125.269; 14 C.F.R. § 125.327; 14 C.F.R. § 125.189.
[59] 14 C.F.R. § 121.1.
[60] 14 C.F.R. § 119.33; 14 C.F.R. § 119.39.
[61] 14 C.F.R. § 119.5; 14 C.F.R. § 119.36.

Legal Boundaries: Private Carriage vs. Common Carriage

The threshold where an entity transitions from private carriage (governed under 14 C.F.R. Part 91 or 14 C.F.R. Part 125) to common carriage (triggering 14 C.F.R. Part 135 or 14 C.F.R. Part 121) represents a critical legal distinction in federal aviation law.

Whether an entity is engaged in common or private carriage relies upon the concept of "holding out." A common carrier is one that holds itself out to the public, or to a particular class, while noncommon or private carriage is an aircraft operation for compensation or hire that does not involve a holding out to others. The FAA has relied for nearly thirty years on a definition of common carriage announced in Advisory Circular 120-12A, under which the elements of common carriage are (1) a holding out of a willingness to (2) transport persons or property (3) from place to place (4) for compensation.[62]

Contractual Limits and Public Availability

The FAA interprets "holding out" broadly. An owner or operator who accepts direct or indirect compensation for flights risks being classified as a common carrier if the service becomes broadly accessible. Under AC 120-12A, executing a small number of private carriage contracts (typically around 3) remains within private parameters.[63] However, expanding that customer pool to between 18 and 24 contracts moves the operation into common carriage, triggering the requirement to obtain a commercial operating certificate.

Application to Commonwealth Operations

This regulatory boundary was central to testimony delivered by Meredith Biggica, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal at PennDOT, during a June 23, 2025, hearing before the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee.[64] Clarifying the Commonwealth's air assets, Biggica noted that Pennsylvania's primary state-operated aircraft, a turboprop King Air 350i, is operated strictly under 14 CFR Part 91.[65]

When lawmakers questioned whether PennDOT could reduce overhead by entering into joint leasing or aircraft-sharing arrangements with outside organizations, Biggica pointed out that accepting compensation or pooling assets could cross the FAA's private carriage boundary.[66] Doing so would subject state operations to higher regulatory frameworks beyond Part 91, necessitating air carrier certification or operational shifts under Part 135.

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[62] "Advisory Circular 120-12A." *U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration*, https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory_Circular/AC%20120-12A.pdf.
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] "Written Testimony of Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Meredith Biggica, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee Public Hearing on Commonwealth Aircraft Operations," *Pennsylvania Senate Republicans Intergovernmental Operations Committee*, published June 23, 2025, https://intergovernmental.pasenategop.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/135/2025/06/PennDOT-Testimony-Senate-IGO-6-23-25.pdf.
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *Ibid.*

Pennsylvania Statutory Framework

While federal regulations govern the safety and mechanics of flight, Pennsylvania state law establishes internal governance, state aircraft oversight, and public accountability under Title 74 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes.[67] This statute authorizes the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to purchase or lease aircraft for official Commonwealth business and requires the department to maintain a publicly accessible flight log.[68] The statute addresses cost allocation among state agencies and the General Assembly, with charges deposited into the Aviation Restricted Account.[69] This provision does not regulate private or commercial aviation operations; it merely governs the Commonwealth's own aircraft fleet management. Pennsylvania's broader aviation authority under 74 Pa.C.S. § 5301 includes oversight of flight operations for Commonwealth-owned aircraft and administration of aviation fuel taxes.[70]

Under 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(a), PennDOT is assigned responsibility for operating and maintaining aircraft utilized for state government personnel. To prevent misuse of taxpayer-funded flight assets, 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b) imposes a transparency mandate requiring PennDOT to publish a monthly flight log.[71]

Under 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b)(9), passenger rosters must explicitly identify all individuals aboard, including names, job titles, and agency affiliations, while granting a narrow statutory exclusion solely for executive protection personnel from the Pennsylvania State Police.[72] Furthermore, 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b)(10) and § 5302(b)(12) mandate that every trip document its specific public justification and record the exact cost transferred back to the user agency's budget.[73]

Federal Preemption of State Aviation Regulation

The FAA exercises broad and largely exclusive authority over the navigable airspace of the United States. States like Pennsylvania retain limited roles in aviation, primarily in airport zoning, land use, and infrastructure.[74] Yet, those roles are subordinate to and must conform with federal law and FAA standards. Where state or local regulation conflicts with or encroaches upon the federally occupied field of aviation safety, federal law preempts state action.

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[67] PennDot's authority is found in Chapter 53 of the Transportation Code (74 P.A.C.S. Ch. 53), which was added to the Code by the act of October 10, 1984 (P.L. 837, No. 164).
[68] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302.
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5301.
[71] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(a); 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b).
[72] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b)(9).
[73] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b)(10); 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b)(12).
[74] *Abdullah v. American Airlines, Inc.*, 181 F.3d 363 (3rd Circuit 1999); *Township of Tinicum v. City of Philadelphia*, 737 F. Supp. 2d 367 (E.D. Pa. 2010).

Federal courts have consistently held that the Federal Aviation Act preempts state regulation of aviation safety and operations.[75] However, Pennsylvania retains authority over certain aviation-related matters not directly involving flight operations, such as airport zoning and obstruction regulation under 74 Pa.C.S. § 5701, which Pennsylvania courts have upheld as a proper exercise of police power to ensure uniform application of FAA safety standards throughout the Commonwealth.[76]

The FAA's authority operates as a powerful check on state and local regulation through the doctrine of preemption. Field preemption applies specifically in areas regulated under the FAA and corresponding Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs); in areas without pervasive regulations or other grounds for preemption, the state standard of care may remain applicable.[77] Police powers of a local government must yield to the pervasive air safety regulations enforced by the Federal Aviation Act.[78] Critically, aviation safety is not considered one of the historic police powers of states, and thus no presumption exists against federal preemption of state regulations relating to aviation safety.[79]

The Third Circuit held that any state or territorial standards of care relating to aviation safety are federally preempted, finding that Congress intended the FAA Administrator to exercise sole discretion in regulating air safety.[80] This conclusion is grounded in the Supreme Court's recognition that a uniform and exclusive system of federal regulation is required if the congressional objectives underlying the FAA are to be fulfilled.[81]

However, the FAA does not entirely preclude state or local regulation.[82] States may enact safety regulations where no federal standards exist and may exercise police powers in areas not conflicting with federal law, such as zoning or noise control, provided such local measures do not interfere with federal objectives.[83] Courts have recognized exceptions, such as local regulation of unmanned aerial vehicles below certain altitudes and municipal airport operations, where concurrent regulation has been expressly contemplated by the FAA.[84] Preemption analyses generally examine whether the state law conflicts with federal regulations or intrudes substantially into the federally occupied field of air safety.[85] Pennsylvania state law is subject to this federal supremacy framework, with federal regulations preempting conflicting state rules while permitting complementary state or local regulations in nonconflicting areas.[86]

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[75] *Sikkelee*, 822 F.3d at 685; *Sikkelee v. Precision Airmotive Corp.*, 907 F.3d 701 (3d Cir. 2018); *Tinicum*, 737 F. Supp. 2d at 372.
[76] *Commonwealth v. Rogers*, 430 Pa. Super. 253 (Pa. Super. Ct. 1993); *Tinicum*, 737 F. Supp. 2d at 372.
[77] *Abdullah*, 181 F.3d at 363.
[78] *Ibid*.
[79] *Ibid.*
[80] *Ibid.*
[81] The Supreme Court recognized that the Federal Aviation Act requires a uniform and exclusive system of federal regulation and that the FAA Administrator has been given broad authority to regulate the use of the navigable airspace in order to ensure the safety of aircraft and the efficient utilization of such airspace. *City of Burbank v. Lockheed Air Terminal Inc.*, 411 U.S. 624 (1973); *Abdullah*, 181 F.3d at 363.
[82] *Abdullah*, 181 F.3d at 363; *Elassaad*, 613 F.3d at 123.
[83] *Ibid.*
[84] *Tinicum*, 737 F. Supp. 2d at 372.
[85] *Abdullah*, 181 F.3d at 363.
[86] *Tinicum*, 737 F. Supp. 2d at 372.

Pennsylvania's Retained Role in Aviation

Pennsylvania retains a defined but subordinate role in aviation matters. Under 74 Pa.C.S. § 5301, PennDOT is authorized to administer aviation provisions, promulgate and enforce regulations necessary to execute its powers relating to aviation, airports, and air safety within the Commonwealth.[87] The Department may also operate and maintain Commonwealth-owned airports and encourage the establishment of others.[88]

In summary, the FAA functions as the supreme federal authority over aviation safety, airspace management, and flight operations, with Pennsylvania's role largely confined to airport infrastructure, zoning, and land use, all of which must align with and defer to FAA standards and determinations.

[87] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5301.
[88] *Ibid.*

RELEVANT COMMONWEALTH AGENCY RULES AND REGULATIONS

Senate Resolution 89 of 2025 asks the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) to review the missions of departments with aircraft, airplane and helicopter usage, operation procedures, training programs, and insurance policies. This chapter contains available information for the individual agencies of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General (OAG). This chapter concludes with a section that discusses items relevant to all Commonwealth aircraft, the potential for leasing aircraft, and a general discussion of Commonwealth aircraft insurance.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

As described in an earlier chapter, PennDOT owns and operates a 2019 King Air 350i airplane. Under 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (a), PennDOT has the statutory authorization to

> …purchase or lease and maintain aircraft required for the proper conduct of the business of the Commonwealth agencies and the General Assembly. The total cost, including all ordinary and necessary expenses for the use of such aircraft, shall be charged by the department to the using agency or the General Assembly.[89]

A memorandum from Dana Fritz, the Governor's Chief of Staff, to all cabinet members and senior staff on July 27, 2023 (see Appendix B for copy of memorandum), notes that "Commonwealth aircraft are to be used when necessary for Commonwealth business as determined by the requesting agency upon consideration of cost and need."[90] Included in Attachment A to that memorandum, factors justifying the use of the air include:

- Commercial airlines do not meet transportation requirements for one of the following reasons:
  - Commercial flights are not available to reach the travel destination;
  - Commercial flights do not accommodate the travel time constraints of Commonwealth official(s) or employee(s); or
  - Commercial flights cannot accommodate the travel team's needs to conduct Commonwealth business en route.

[89] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (a).

[90] Dana Fritz, Governor's Chief of Staff, "Memorandum to Cabinet Members and Senior Staff, Operation and Use of Commonwealth Aircraft," dated July 27, 2023. Source: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

- Travel by vehicle or other modes of transportation do not accommodate meeting schedule/time constraints, particularly where travel is more than a 2.5 hour drive from Harrisburg.
- Security, threat level, or operational requirements preclude use of commercial airlines or other forms of transportation, including use in emergency and disaster response situations.[91]

The memorandum also dictates the priority use of the Commonwealth aircraft to be the following: (1) Governor, (2) Lieutenant Governor, (3) Statewide elected Commonwealth Officials, (4) members of the Governor's cabinet and senior staff, (5) board and commission chairpersons and legislative leadership, all with the Governor's Chief of Staff's approval. If none of the individuals listed above need the airplane, agency heads, deputy secretaries, and equivalent senior agency managers may also use the airplane on a first-come, first-served basis.[92]

PennDOT Flight Request Form and Flight Logs

If an eligible Commonwealth employee is interested in requesting the use of the PennDOT aircraft for business usage, they are required to complete the AV-18 Flight Request Form from PennDOT (see Appendix C for a copy of the form). That form asks for the requesting agency name; a signature of senior-level staff (Deputy Secretary level or above) approving the flight; a list of passengers (including whether they are a Commonwealth employee, what agency they are with, and their title; a basic flight plan request; purpose of flight; and applicable usage considerations/justifications for use of state aircraft).[93]

If the flight occurs, PennDOT adds similar information from the Flight Request Form to the publicly available state flight logs.[94] Under 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (b), PennDOT is required to maintain and publish on PennDOT's website a flight log with the following details:

(1) Flight date.
(2) Flight identification number.
(3) Agency name.
(4) Aircraft.
(5) Originating city.
(6) Departure time.
(7) Destination city. If a flight includes more than one destination city, all destination cities shall be identified for such flight.
(8) Arrival time at and departure time from the destination city.

[91] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.
[92] Dana Fritz, Governor's Chief of Staff, Memorandum to Cabinet Members and Senior Staff, "Operation and Use of Commonwealth Aircraft," published July 27, 2023. (Nolan Trently, PennDOT, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.)
[93] "Flight Request Form," *PennDOT*, accessed August 4, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/penndot/documents/public/pubsforms/forms/av-18.pdf.
[94] "State Flight Logs," *PennDOT*, accessed October 23, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/programs-and-doing-business/aviation/state-flight-logs.

(9) All passengers, with the exception of Pennsylvania State Police security personnel, including first and last names, job titles, State agency, organization, business or other entity to which the passenger is affiliated or represents.
(10) Public purpose of the trip.
(11) Total hours.
(12) Invoice amount.[95]

The public flight logs include all of this required information. As a side note, the flight logs include a column called "Purpose of Trip." For nearly every logged flight, "business" is recorded in this column with no further explanation.[96] It is unclear whether the legislative intent behind 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b)(10) is that the "public purpose of the trip" should be more detailed than just "business."

Invoiced Costs of PennDOT Aircraft to Agencies

An earlier chapter, Commonwealth Current Air Assets and Costs, provides the total costs of operating the 2019 King Air 350i. Table C1 summarizes the PennDOT total presented in that chapter.

Table C1
Estimated PennDOT Flight Operations Division Expenditures to Operate and Store Aircraft by Fiscal Year ($000s)

FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	5-Yr Avg.
$652.3	$1,058.4	$968.9	$987.3	$1,098.7	$953.1

Note: Includes estimated personnel services, hangar lease payments, and aircraft fuel. Excludes capital expenses. See Figure B2 on page 11 for details on what costs are included.

Source: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, September 21, 2026.

Based on flight logs, the top portion of Table C2 below provides the total costs billed to agencies using the state aircraft over the past five fiscal years. The Governor's Office and the Lieutenant Governor's Office were recently billed the most of all agencies. These costs currently include a $1,350/block (flight) hour, defined as the elapsed time from when the airplane door is closed until it is opened at the destination.[97] When JSGC staff asked how the block hour rate is calculated, PennDOT staff responded

[95] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5303(b).
[96] "State Flight Logs," *PennDOT*, accessed October 23, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/programs-and-doing-business/aviation/state-flight-logs.
[97] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

> The calculation of the block hour rate is intended to cover the costs of the fuel and parts, maintenance, engine, and propeller reserves, not the entire cost of the Department's flight operations. The Bureau Director and Chief Pilot are responsible for making the calculations. The block hour rate is assessed every change in Administration.[98]

In a subsequent question to PennDOT staff, JSGC staff asked about additional charges above the block hour rate mentioned in Attachment A of the July 27, 2023 Memorandum on the Operation and Use of Commonwealth Aircraft. (See Appendix B July 27, 2023 Memorandum in this Report). PennDOT staff clarified on July 24, 2026 that in addition to the block hour rate, "…agencies pay for overtime expenses incurred by the pilots (beyond 8 hours per day) including pilot meals, and any overnight accommodation needed for the pilots, facility fees, and de-icing fees."[99]

Under 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (a) "…all ordinary and necessary expenses for the use of such aircraft…" shall be charged by PennDOT to the agency using the aircraft.[100] It is unclear whether the legislative intent was to include all flight operation costs or only a portion of those costs. The middle of Table C2 calculates the share of costs billed to agencies compared to the estimated flight operations costs.[101] This calculation includes fuel, maintenance, estimated personnel services for flight operations, hangar rent/lease, and other nominal costs in the denominator. Over the five-year period, reimbursed costs are only 34 percent of estimated flight-operation costs.

If the legislative intent of 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (a) was to seek reimbursement for all expenses PennDOT incurs as a result of owning the state plane (all flight operation costs), the block hour rate billed to other agencies would likely need to be increased significantly, as it is only roughly covering 34 percent of the estimated flight-operation costs over the last five years. However, it is unclear how many agencies would scale back their flight usage if the block hour rate increased significantly and agency budgets were not increased to account for the change. If flights are reduced, the block hour rate would rise further in future years, since fixed operational expenses (such as hangar rent) would be divided among fewer flights.

[98] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.
[99] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 24, 2026.
[100] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (a).
[101] As currently calculated, PennDOT's block hour rate is not designed to cover the entire cost of PennDOT's flight operations.

Table C2
PennDOT Aircraft Cost
Invoiced to Agencies ($000s), Total Flights, and Flight Hours
(FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26)

Agency	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	5-Yr. Avg.
Governor's Office	$69	$153	$257	$203	$58	$148
Lieutenant Governor's Office	$0	$18	$65	$67	$56	$41
Transportation (excl. maintenance)	$72	$40	$50	$37	$25	$45
Human Services	$26	$29	$32	$25	$10	$25
Attorney General	$44	$27	$20	$23	$0	$23
Community and Economic Devel.	$15	$13	$20	$27	$13	$18
Drugs and Alcohol	$0	$0	$11	$18	$13	$8
Other	$22	$9	$37	$9	$1	$16
Total Cost Billed to Agency	**$249**	**$289**	**$494**	**$410**	**$178**	**$324**
Est. share of flight operation costs reimbursed	38%	27%	51%	42%	16%	34%
# Flights (Shared Flights = 1 Flight)	**88**	**98**	**127**	**103**	**46**	**92**
Total Flight Hours	**149**	**176**	**256**	**196**	**84**	**172**
Cost Invoiced ($000s)/Flight Hour	**$1.68**	**$1.64**	**$1.93**	**$2.09**	**$2.13**	**$1.89**

Notes: The estimated share of flight operation costs reimbursed = (total cost billed to agency)/(total estimated flight operation costs). The share of flight hours includes a small number of maintenance flights that are not invoiced to any agency.

Source: "State Flight Logs," *PennDOT*, accessed October 23, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/programs-and-doing-business/aviation/state-flight-logs.

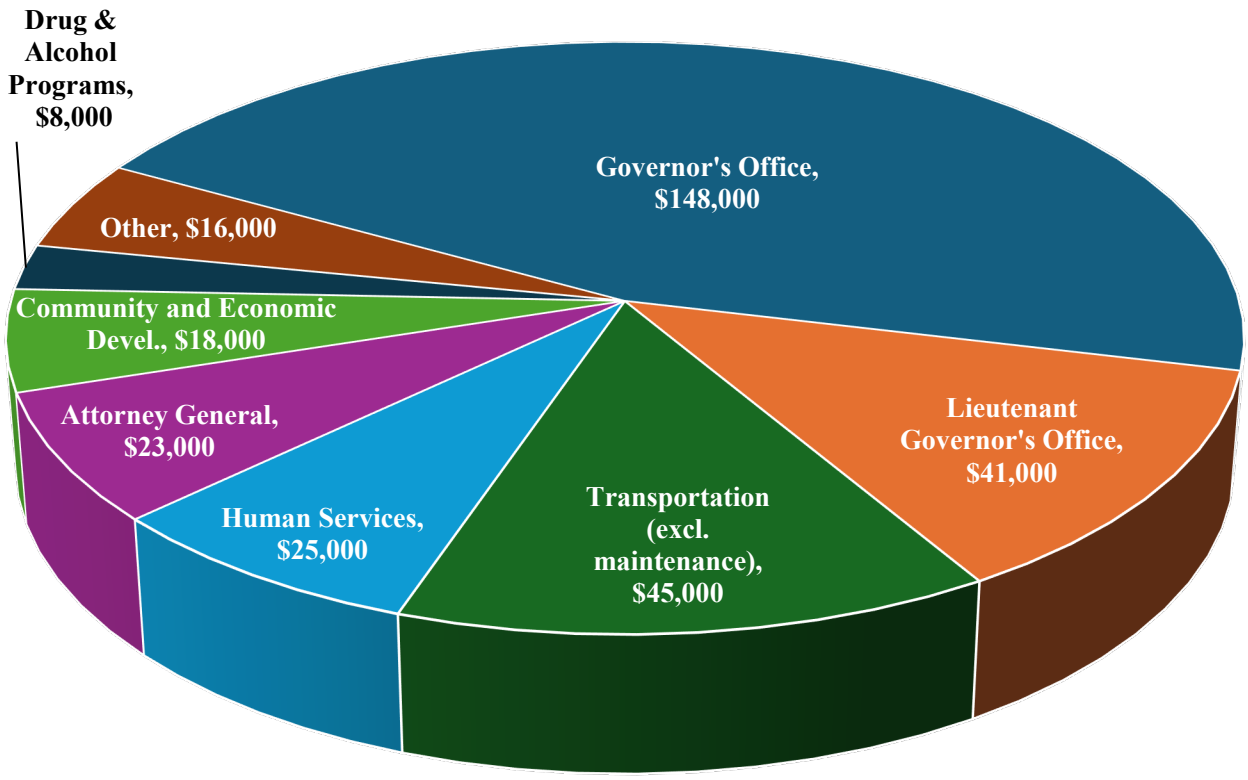
One final takeaway from Table C2 is a noticeable drop-off in invoiced costs billed, number of flights, and total flight hours in FY 2025-26 compared to the prior four years.[102] Figure C1 below shows the five-year average share of costs billed to agencies, and the Governor's Office was billed just under half of the total costs billed to all agencies. The Governor's Office aircraft usage in FY 2025-26 in Table C2 above declined by roughly three-fourths of the amount it used the PennDOT aircraft in the prior two years (FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25), which represents the bulk of the drop-off in invoiced costs in FY 2025-26 overall.

PSP sometimes transports the Governor or Lieutenant Governor on PSP aircraft. Beginning in 2025, PSP began publicly releasing flight logs for all flights on PSP aircraft that transported the Governor or Lieutenant Governor. From February through June 2025, PSP publicly noted three total flights (one for the Governor and two for the Lieutenant Governor). For all of FY 2025-26 (July 2025 through June 2026), PSP transported the Governor 61 times, totaling

[102] JSGC staff also reviewed flight logs for the first quarter of FY 2025-26 and noted that this trend continues into the current fiscal year.

129 flight hours at a cost of $285,605, as PSP reported.[103] While PSP does not invoice the Governor's Office or any agency for these flights, PSP does include the cost of these flights within its public flight logs. It is unclear how often the Governor's Office used the PSP aircraft prior to 2025, but if usage of the PSP aircraft is a new routine for the Governor's Office, it could explain the large decrease in PennDOT's invoiced costs billed to the Governor's Office and the large decline in the overall flight hours of the PennDOT aircraft in FY 2025-26.

Figure C1
Five-Year Average Invoice Cost Billed to Agencies
(FY 21-22 – FY 25-26)



Note: Includes invoiced costs of the use of the PennDOT's state plane.

Source: "State Flight Logs," PennDOT, accessed October 23, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/penndot/programs-and-doing-business/aviation/state-flight-logs.

JSGC reached out to the Governor's Office several times during this study to ask why the Governor's Office has not used the PennDOT plane as much in FY 2025-26 as it has in the past. As of November 12, 2026, JSGC staff members have not received a response.

[103] The Lieutenant Governor also used the PSP aircraft twice in FY 2025-26 for a total of 4.6 flight hours and a total cost to PSP of $4,830. Source: "Flight Logs," *PSP*, accessed October 23, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/psp/resources/flight-logs.

While the Governor's Office did not explain why use of the PennDOT plane declined so much in FY 2025-26, the Office may have increased use of the PSP plane in FY 2025-26, although no publicly available data prior to 2025 can confirm this hypothesis.

PennDOT Pilot Training

PennDOT does not provide any in-house pilot training. FlightSafety International conducts the training annually.[104] According to FlightSafety International, it conducts King Air 350 pilot training in Atlanta, Tampa, Teterboro, New Jersey, and Wichita.

Auditor General 2007 Special Performance Audit of PennDOT

Nearly two decades have passed since the Pennsylvania Auditor General's Office audited PennDOT's operation of state-owned aircraft. The report entitled "The Operation and Use of Pennsylvania's State-Owned Aircraft: Special Performance Audit of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation" was released by the Auditor General's Office in September 2007 and found:

> …that PennDOT's performance fell short primarily in two areas:
>
> - Finding One: PennDOT could not prove that its state-owned aircraft always carried passengers on official Commonwealth business only, or that flight reimbursements originated from the Commonwealth rather than from outside sources.
> - Finding Two: PennDOT booked flights using procedures that strayed from the state's written policy - a policy that already had weaknesses of its own - and therefore did not demonstrate the highest possible level of accountability to state taxpayers.[105]

While the PennDOT flight logs indicate that these issues have largely been resolved, this current JSGC Report should not be construed as an audit of the program. JSGC staff verified that the public flight logs include passengers' full names, the agency requesting use of the plane, and other items required by statute. However, staff did not compare the public flight logs to any internal paperwork PennDOT had regarding the individual flights.

[104] "Beechcraft Pilot and Maintenance Training," *FlightSafety International*, accessed August 4, 2026, https://www.flightsafety.com/business-commercial/beechcraft/. Link provided by Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 24, 2026.

[105] "Operation and Use of Pennsylvania's State-Owned Aircraft, A Special Performance Audit of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation," *Pennsylvania Auditor General*, published September 2007, https://www.paauditor.gov/wp-content/uploads/audits-archive/Media/Default/Reports/spePlane092807.pdf.

Pennsylvania State Police

As noted in a prior chapter, PSP has several airplanes and helicopters located in various hangars across the state. These aircraft assist federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in Pennsylvania when needed. PSP provided a list of missions in which its aircraft have provided support. These missions are listed in Table C3.

Table C3
PSP Missions for which PSP aircraft are used

Abandoned/Stolen Vehicle	Other	Search - Criminal
Aircraft Repositioning	Patrol	Search - Missing Persons
Civil Disturbance	Personnel Transport	Station Visit
Crash Investigation	Photographic Missions	Surveillance – Criminal
Domestic Security Check	Presidential/VP Escort	Surveillance – Special
Equipment Transport	Prisoner Extradition	Traffic Control
Fire Reported	Public Relations	Training/Safety Flight
Maintenance Flight	Pursuit	Warrant Service
Marijuana Eradication	Rescue/Evacuation	

Source: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, July 13, 2026.

PSP Flight Logs

Since February 2025, PSP has publicly released flight logs, similar to PennDOT, whenever PSP transports the Governor or Lieutenant Governor.[106] Since PSP flight logs cover roughly the last 1.5 years, it is not possible to determine whether PSP's current use to transport the Governor and Lieutenant Governor matches prior trends. From February 23, 2025 through June 30, 2025, the PSP flight logs detailed three flights: the Lieutenant Governor used a PSP plane twice, and the Governor used a PSP plane once. For all of FY 2025-26, the PSP flight logs noted the Governor's Office used the PSP plane 61 times at a cost of $280,775 for a total of 129 flight hours, and the Lieutenant Governor used the PSP plane twice at a cost of $4,830 for a total of less than five flight hours.[107]

Although PSP calculated the cost of each flight the Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's Offices took, neither office reimbursed PSP for flight operating costs. Unlike the PennDOT plane, where the agency using it must reimburse PennDOT, JSGC staff found no such statute for the PSP

[106] "Flight Logs," *PSP*, accessed October 23, 2026, https://www.pa.gov/agencies/psp/resources/flight-logs.
[107] PSP staff noted in an e-mail that the cost listed on the flight logs is the hourly operating cost of the aircraft (including fuel and maintenance) based on the flight hours flown. It also includes all other expenses accrued as a result of the flight (e.g., aircraft services, airport landing/ramp fees, and parking fees). Source: Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, July 13, 2026.

planes.[108] If the Governor and Lieutenant Governor continue to use the PSP plane for more routine business flights (excluding specific PSP-directly related business), policymakers may want to add legislation requiring agencies using PSP planes to reimburse PSP for the cost of those flights, similar to what occurs with the PennDOT plane.

PSP Pilot Training

All PSP troopers must have at least a private pilot license before applying for a pilot position, and all pilots complete cadet training to become a PSP trooper. The PSP provides in-house training to bring pilots up to FAA commercial standards, plus external, aircraft-specific training for the fixed-wing aircraft they will fly.[109]

New helicopter pilots must hold a private license. PSP then provides them with training to commercial standards following a Bell 407 training syllabus developed by the PSP Training and Safety Unit. Pilots start with mission equipment operations and basic maneuvers, then progress to advanced maneuvers, emergency procedures, night vision goggles training, and mission equipment use. They then attend factory training for emergency procedure training during day/night flight and night vision goggles training, and they receive their commercial certification, which requires 150 hours of flight training. The factory training allows PSP pilots to practice touchdown autorotations and other complete emergency procedures not practiced in PSP aircraft due to the danger and risk of damage to the aircraft.[110]

PSP Aircraft Passengers Regulations

PSP staff noted that:

> …only State Police personnel, other law enforcement personnel, or other persons representing Federal, State, or Local agencies directly related to the mission should be transported in Department aircraft.
>
> Under exigent circumstances, transport of other persons is approved at the pilot's discretion.
>
> To transport other personnel, authorization shall be given by the Director, Special Services Division, or higher Department authority.[111]

[108] 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (a) statutorily requires that agencies be charged by PennDOT for use of the PennDOT plane.
[109] Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, July 13, 2026.
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] *Ibid.*

Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General

As noted in a prior chapter, OAG currently owns a 2022 C208B Cessna Grand Caravan EX.[112] According to the OAG,

> The Office of Attorney General Aviation Unit leverages unique capabilities to provide professional aerial law enforcement and specialized missions of tactical support, surveillance, observation, search, and transportation for our agents and all other local, state, and federal agencies. The Aviation Unit supports state and community efforts against illicit drugs and emerging threats.[113]

Table C4 below notes the various mission sets for which the OAG aircraft is used. The OAG Aviation Unit has a role in investigations involving narcotics, gun violence, human trafficking, child predators, environmental crimes, and other offenses. The Aviation Unit works with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), PSP, and numerous local task forces on various investigations.

Table C4
Missions For Which OAG Aircraft Are Used

Surveillance/Evidence Collection	Vehicle Tracking	Natural Disasters
Buy-follow	Eradication/Indoor Grows	Homeland Security
Buy-bust	Training	Search & Rescue
Controlled Delivery	Transportation	
Search Warrants	Civil Unrest	

Source: Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.

OAG Federal Requirements

OAG staff noted that the office complies with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91, and the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM).[114] The latest version of AIM was effective on July 9, 2026, and is published on the FAA website.[115]

[112] Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.
[113] *Ibid.*
[114] See prior chapter on Federal Aviation Regulatory and Pennsylvania State Flight Governance for more details on Part 91. Source: Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.
[115] "Aeronautical Information Manual," *FAA*, effective July 9, 2026, https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/atpubs/aim_html/index.html.

On October 19, 2023, the FAA approved the OAG's Progressive Maintenance Program. Instead of an annual inspection, this program breaks the inspection into segments based on flight hours to keep the plane available and avoid several weeks of annual inspection downtime.[116]

OAG Internal Regulations

The Pennsylvania OAG primarily operates under the OAG Directive 523, dated October 23, 2023. (See Appendix D for a copy of this directive.) According to Directive 523,

> [i]t is the policy of the Office of Attorney General to utilize manned and unmanned aviation assets to enhance the agency's ability to save lives, protect property, obtain evidence, and document crime scenes. Any application of the aviation assets will be in accordance with federal, state, and local laws, to include constitutional privacy rights, search and seizure regulations and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.[117]

Directive 523 also provides duties and responsibilities for various OAG aviation personnel and provides more details on how other agencies and agents can request the use of OAG aircraft.[118] In addition to Directive 523, OAG also has an internal Aviation Unit Operation Manual, last updated on January 12, 2026, that provides more specifics on various:

- administrative items such as unit organization, chain of command, and record keeping;
- personnel items such as qualifications, duties and responsibilities, medical certificates, measures of performance and uniforms and safety equipment;
- training items such as the training required for pilots and tactical flight officers and training records of continuing education;
- operation items such as civil aircraft and public use operations, crew rest policy, minimum weather and crew requirements, and more specific information on the duties of various OAG employees during various missions; and
- safety management system items such as roles and responsibilities, hazard identification and analysis, safety performance monitoring and measurements, and safety communications;
- maintenance items such as certificated maintenance standards, FAA airworthiness directives, pilot authorized maintenance, maintenance facility, tool control policy, tool calibration, aircraft maintenance records, and deferred maintenance; and
- special operations items.[119]

[116] Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 7, 2026.
[117] Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, October 7, 2026.
[118] *Ibid.*
[119] *Ibid.*

General Commonwealth Discussion on Use of Aircraft

Considering Leasing or Sharing of Aircraft

Senate Resolution 89 required this report to evaluate leasing versus owning aviation assets. JSGC staff asked for feedback from all three agencies with manned aircraft on the feasibility of leasing versus owning aviation assets. Below are summaries of discussions JSGC staff had with staff of PennDOT, PSP, and OAG.

As detailed in the prior chapter, Pennsylvania's primary state-operated aircraft, a turboprop King Air 350i (PennDOT's plane), is operated strictly under 14 CFR Part 91. Operating under Part 91 requires the aircraft to remain a private carriage and not regularly transport customers outside the owner or operator. See previous chapter for more details and a more thorough discussion of Part 91.

During a June 23, 2025 hearing before the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee, Meredith Biggica, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal at PennDOT was asked if PennDOT had investigated some sort of sharing or leasing agreement with an outside group, company or organization. She noted that accepting compensation or pooling assets could cross the FAA's private carriage boundary.[120] Doing so would subject state operations to higher regulatory frameworks beyond Part 91, necessitating air carrier certification or operational shifts under Part 135.

In discussions with JSGC staff, PennDOT staff noted that if they needed to comply with Part 135, flight operations would need to hire additional staff to support:

- Director of Operations for Part 135
- Director of Maintenance for Part 135 and performing required scheduled maintenance
- Additional record keeping
- Additional training for pilots and maintenance staff[121]

PennDOT staff noted that the current block hour rate would need to increase significantly to absorb the higher operating costs under Part 135. PennDOT noted that at least 25 other state aviation bureaus or divisions also operate under Part 91.[122]

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[120] "Written Testimony of Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Meredith Biggica, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee Public Hearing on Commonwealth Aircraft Operations," *Pennsylvania Senate Republicans Intergovernmental Operations Committee*, published June 23, 2025, https://intergovernmental.pasenategop.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/135/2025/06/PennDOT-Testimony-Senate-IGO-6-23-25.pdf.

[121] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

[122] These states include: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, New

In a Zoom meeting held on May 11, 2026, JSGC staff asked PSP staff whether PSP had any internal review or experience with leasing versus owning various aviation assets. PSP staff noted that in 2012, PSP leased six aircraft for a 10-year lease for traffic enforcement. In the end, leasing the aircraft was more expensive than owning them outright. More recently, PSP leased a plane to temporarily replace one that was down for repairs. The leasing terms were difficult to work around because PSP had to use specific companies for all maintenance. The loss of autonomy affected their ability to use the plane when needed. Additionally, the lease terms were difficult to negotiate, and maintenance and repair of the aircraft became an issue at lease expiration, in addition to the restrictions on maintenance during the lease.

JSGC staff asked OAG staff if there has been any internal review or experience of leasing versus owning various aviation assets and if so, what were the upsides and downsides of leasing versus owning. OAG staff responded that "Due to the OPTEMPO[123] and specialized mission equipment required to conduct Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General Missions, leasing options are not available."[124]

After discussions with PennDOT, PSP, and OAG, none of the agencies believed there would be significant (or any) savings seen if leasing or sharing aircraft with outside groups.

Insurance of State Aircraft

Insurance for all aircraft owned and operated by the Commonwealth is limited to a blanket travel accident policy that provides accidental death and dismemberment, emergency medical benefits and evacuation benefits, and repatriation of remains benefits to all active full-time and part-time employee pilots and crew members of the Commonwealth. It also covers all active full-time Commonwealth employees and guests traveling on the business of the Commonwealth, where guests are individuals invited and authorized to participate in a covered activity that is under the control of the Commonwealth. The current policy is active from July 1, 2025 through July 1, 2028.[125]

PennDOT staff also received this description of the insurance on aircraft owned and operated in the Commonwealth from the Pennsylvania Department of General Services, Underwriting Division:

> There is not any insurance in place for the hull of any aircraft. Also, there is not an aviation liability policy in place, either. However, there is a Blanket Travel Accident policy that provides benefits for plane passengers, including pilots and crew. … It pays varying levels of benefits based on death or dismemberment in the event of a loss with an aggregate limit of $1,000,000 per covered accident. The

Hampshire, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Virginia. Source: Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, June 4, 2026.

[123] OPTEMPO stands for Operation tempo, or the pace of operational activity, as measured by the number and frequency of missions the Aviation Unit supports.

[124] Marguerite Quinn, OAG Director of Government Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 20, 2026.

[125] Major Leslie Barr, PSP Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs Office, email attachment to Commission staff, July 13, 2026.

annual premium is $23,564 and it is allocated between PSP, OAG, and PennDOT, who all share the policy.[126]

In reviewing the PennDOT and PSP flight logs, there are occasions when the Governor's family travels on the state plane with the Governor. Given the increased security threat level to the Governor and his family, having them travel with him on the state plane rather than on commercial aircraft or other transportation options is likely a better security option. Other states, like Kansas, New York, and Oklahoma, specifically note that the immediate families of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor may travel on state aircraft, and many other states likely have similar allowances.[127] However, since the family members are not state employees, to be covered under the Commonwealth's blanket travel accident policy, they must be "guests traveling on the business of the Commonwealth, where guests are individuals invited and authorized to participate in a covered activity that is under the control of the Commonwealth."

While it is possible to argue that any public appearances and activities with the Governor by his family are attached to his role as Governor and that makes it the business of the Commonwealth, it is unclear if the insurance company would agree with this argument in the event of an accident that injured or killed the Governor's family members traveling on the state-owned aircraft. If insurance would not cover those family members, the Commonwealth could be held liable. Unless the Department of General Services has received clear guidance from the insurance company that family members of state employees would be covered under the Commonwealth's blanket travel accident policy, it may be advisable to have all family members of state employees and possibly all non-state employees sign a waiver to limit the Commonwealth's liability in the event of an aircraft accident.[128]

State Planes Used in Most Cost-Effective Way

In discussions with the agencies, there does not appear to be any outwardly inefficient use of the aircraft within each agency.[129] However, according to 2025 and 2026 public flight logs, the Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's Offices do regularly use both the PennDOT and PSP planes for transportation. Since the Governor's Office has traditionally been the most consistent user of the PennDOT state plane, if that office continues to regularly use the PSP more than the PennDOT plane, the PennDOT plane may not get enough use to warrant a separate flight operations division within PennDOT. While PSP's mission is not to regularly transport state officials across the state, PennDOT and PSP may be able to collaborate over time to transfer state-plane missions and the state plane to PSP, potentially eliminating some duplicative services between PennDOT's state plane and PSP.

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[126] Nolan Trently, PennDOT Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, email attachment to Commission staff, July 24, 2026.

[127] Kansas: KRS§ 174.506(2); New York: "Executive Chamber Policy on Executive Use of State Aircraft," *New York State Executive Chamber*, February 9, 2022, https://ko.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/Executive_Chamber_Aircraft_Policy.pdf; and Oklahoma: 74 O.S. § 500.6F.

[128] If a family member is a minor child, the waiver would be signed by a parent or guardian.

[129] This Report should not be viewed as an audit of any of the flight operations in PSP, OAG, or PennDOT. JSGC staff asked questions and requested data from each agency and reported what the agencies reported as factual information.

OTHER STATES
AIR ASSETS, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES

Staff, with assistance from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), have identified 43 states, in addition to Pennsylvania, that own aviation assets. Many of these assets are dedicated to law enforcement, firefighting, and search and rescue missions and are only available to those mission-related personnel. Some states also provide executive transportation by their State Police or Highway Patrol. In some states, this privilege is reserved for the Governor and sometimes the Lieutenant Governor; in others, all state personnel. In many states, the aviation assets are held by the state-level law enforcement agency, while others are owned by natural resource and conservation agencies, including departments of forestry, wildlife, or statewide firefighting units like California's Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as CAL FIRE. Others house them in transportation or administration departments. In all instances, some version of "official business of the State" must be used to justify the use of the assets.

According to the Council of State Governments (CSG), 39 governors can use some form of aviation asset for work-related purposes. Four states allow only helicopters for the governor; 18 allow only airplanes; and 17 allow both helicopters and airplanes.[130] The following table lists states that allow executive transportation on state-owned aviation assets. Other aviation assets, such as those dedicated to law enforcement, natural resources, wildlife, and forestry, are not included unless they specifically permit executive transportation.

The following table compiles multiple sources: NCSL, CSG, and staff searches of individual state websites. The NCSL research included all aviation assets and did not distinguish executive transportation in specific detail. A large portion of the CSG information was based on a 2022 survey and may be outdated. Staff accessed state websites from October 26, 2026 to November 3, 2026. When data sources were inconsistent, staff treated state website information as most determinative, as it was most likely the most recent specific data available. Inventory counts only include aircraft available for executive transport. Availability of flight logs and passenger manifests are frequently released only after a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request or similar state public records law. A few states publish these documents routinely on their public-facing websites. No gubernatorial or general statewide elected or appointed executive transportation was found available in California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, Oregon, Rhode Island, or Vermont.

[130] "The Book of the States, Table 4.3, The Governors: Compensation, Staff, Travel and Residence," 2023, *The Council of State Governments*, https://bookofthestates.org/tables/2023-4-3/.

Table D1
Aviation Asset Information and Policies in Selected States
Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
Alabama	Law Enforcement Agency Aviation Unit[131]	11 Bell helicopters 2 twin-engine fixed wing aircraft 3 single-engine aircraft	The two twin-engine planes are used for prisoner transport and executive transport; the remaining aircraft are used for law enforcement and disaster/rescue operations. All available to the Governor.	923 flights in 2025, with 66 for executive/personnel transport.[132] Helicopter passenger logs and flight manifests available with a formal public records request.[133]
Alaska	Department of Public Safety[134]	38 fixed wing aircraft and helicopters	State troopers; Governor may use airplanes, depending on availability.	
	Department of Transportation and Public Facilities[135]	1 aircraft	Governor may use if available.	
Arizona	Department of Public Safety Aviation Bureau[136]	5 helicopters, 2 fixed-wing aircraft	Public safety personnel, other state employees, and equipment; Governor may use all.	1,805 missions in 2024, with 470 law enforcement and 368 search and rescue missions.[137] Flight logs and passenger manifests subject to public records law requests from the Department of Administration or Public Safety for law enforcement-related requests.

[131] Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report, *Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA)*, 13-14, https://www.alea.gov/sites/default/files/ALEA%20Annual%20Report%20FY25%201.14.26.pdf
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] ALEA Public Records Request Portal, Al.accessgov.com.
[134] "Statewide Aviation," *Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities*, accessed October 16, 2026, https://dot.alaska.gov/stwdav/stwdavINFO.shtml#a12 accessed October 16, 2026, "AWT Special Assignments," *Alaska Department of Public Safety Recruitment*, accessed November 3, 2026, https://alaskastatetrooper.com/awt-special-assignments/.
[135] Alaska Statewide Aviation.
[136] "Arizona Department of Public Safety Annual Report FY2024," *Arizona Department of Public Safety*,. https://www.azdps.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/1543582611_AnnualReport-FY2024_v02-Web.pdf.
[137] *Ibid*.

Table D1
Aviation Asset Information and Policies in Selected States
Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
Arkansas	State Police Air Support Unit[138]	1 helicopter, 2 airplanes	Law enforcement, searches, manhunts, surveillance and transportation; executive transport of Governor and state officials.	2023–164 missions
Colorado	State Patrol Aircraft Section and Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics[139]	4 airplanes	Law enforcement, transportation for state business and traffic enforcement operations; cost-efficient agency travel; airplanes available to Governor.	
Georgia	Aviation Authority[140]	67 registered aircraft	Provides executive transportation for high-priority travel.	
	State Patrol Aviation Division[141]	15 helicopters and one airplane	Search and rescue, natural disasters, fire suppression, executive transport, law enforcement.	
Idaho	Transportation Department, Division of Aeronautics[142]	Older articles report 3 or 4 airplanes	State agencies may use aircraft for State business purposes; specific flight scheduling website.[143]	

[138] "Arkansas State Police," *Arkansas Department of Public Safety*, published September 30, 2024, https://dps.arkansas.gov/law-enforcement/arkansas-state-police/your-arkansas-state-police/.
[139] "Colorado State Patrol," *Colorado Department of Public Safety,* https://csp.colorado.gov/services-we-provide/aircraft; and "2025 Annual Report, Division of Aeronautics," *Colorado Department of Transportation*, https://oitco.hylandcloud.com/cdotrmpop/docpop/docpop.aspx.
[140] "About Us," *Georgia Aviation Authority*, https://gaa.georgia.gov/about-us; "EFlight," *Georgia Aviation Authority*, https://eflight.com/fleets/georgia-aviation-authority. The authority does not have jurisdiction over Georgia Department of Safety, Department of Natural Resources, or State Forestry Commission assets. GA Code §6-5-4.
[141] "Aviation," *Georgia Department of Public Safety*, https://dps.georgia.gov/contacts/commissioners-office/aviation and GA Code §35-2-140.
[142] "Aeronautics in Idaho," *Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)*, https://itd.idaho.gov/aero/.
[143] "Scheduling Flights with Aeronautics," *ITD, Division of Aeronautics*, https://itd.idaho.gov/aero/flight-scheduling/.

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Aviation Asset Information and Policies in Selected States
Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
Indiana	State Police Aviation Section[144]	3 helicopters, 2 planes	No specific authority, but Governor has used a helicopter in 2025 for 11 trips.[145]	
Kansas	Highway Patrol, Troop L – Aircraft	1 executive aircraft	Executive transportation for state officials.	
Kentucky	Transportation Cabinet, Aircraft Fleet Services[146]	2 helicopters 3 airplanes	Elected officials and state employees conducting official business when time is of the essence; dependents specifically allowed.	Executive flight logs from 2019 through 2026 are available on the Governor's official website, including aircraft used, departure and destination points, passenger lists.[147]
Louisiana	State Police, Air Support Unit[148]	6 airplanes 9 helicopters	Dignitary transportation, disaster response, law enforcement, search and rescue.	
Maryland	Department of State Police Aviation Command[149]	10 helicopters 1 fixed wing aircraft	Law enforcement, search and rescue, disaster assessment; medevac, neonatal and pediatric transfers; airplane at the Governor's disposal when not used to transport prisoners extradited to Maryland.[150]	

[144] "Aviation Section," *Indiana State Police*, https://www.in.gov/isp/commands/special-operations/.
[145] "Gov. Braun used state helicopter to fly to or from Jasper home 11 times over six months," *Indiana Capitol Chronicle, The Indiana Lawyer*, August 20, 2025. https://www.theindianalawyer.com/articles/gov-braun-used-state-helicopter-to-fly-to-or-from-jasper-home-11-times-over-six-months.
[146] "Aircraft Fleet Services," *Team Kentucky Transportation Cabinet*, https://transportation.ky.gov/Aviation/Pages/fleet.aspx; and KRS § 174.506.
[147] "Executive Flight Logs," *Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear*, https://governor.ky.gov/flights.
[148] "Air Support Unit," *Louisiana State Police*, https://lsp.org/about/leadershipsections/special-operations/air-support-unit/.
[149] "Aviation Command," *Maryland Department of State Police*, https://mdsp.maryland.gov/safety-prevention/aviation-command.
[150] "Report of the Governor's Salary Commission," *Governor's Salary Commission* 13, January 2026. https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/BudgetFiscal/2026-Governors-Salary-Commission.pdf.

Table D1
Aviation Asset Information and Policies in Selected States
Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
Michigan	Department of Transportation Office of Aeronautics Air Transport Unit[151]	5 airplanes	Executive and operational flight services for state government personnel.	
Minnesota	Department of Transportation Aeronautics Services[152]	2 airplanes	State employees, the Legislature and constitutional officers when conducting official business.	
Mississippi	Department of Finance and Administration Air Transport Services[153]	1 airplane	State official or state agency may use an aircraft to conduct business on behalf of the state and/or to the benefit of the state; non-officials or non-employees discouraged unless authorized by official or employee and noted on request for use; priority list for availability: Governor, Lt. Gov, all other statewide elected officials, state Development Authority, all other state agencies.	All planes to keep detailed records of flights, passengers, costs Passenger manifests and request for use forms subject to state public records law
Missouri	State Highway Patrol Aircraft Division[154]	5 airplanes, 1 of which is available for executive transport	Elected or appointed officials and other qualified state personnel.	

[151] Michigan Department of Transportation Office of Aeronautics Air Transport Unit Overview presented to Michigan House Transportation Committee, December 2017, https://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/PDF/Transportation/Transportation_Subcmte_Testimony_AirTransportUnit_Overview_12-5-17.pdf. More current inventory was not found, but the Michigan Civil Service Commission has a position listing for the Unit that describes the Unit's activities. https://mcsc.state.mi.us/AgencyPDFs/DEPTALTER43Y%20PD%205.2026.pdf

[152] "Aeronautics Services, Air Transportation Section," *Minnesota Department of Transportation*, https://www.dot.state.mn.us/aero/services.html.

[153] "Policy and Procedure Manual for the Utilization and Scheduling of State Aircraft," *State of Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration, Office of Air Transport Services*, 5-6, Rev'd. March 2024. https://www.dfa.ms.gov/sites/default/files/Air%20Transport%20Home/aircraftpolicy.pdf.

[154] "Missouri State Highway Patrol Aircraft Division, The Fleet," *Missouri Department of Public Safety*, https://statepatrol.dps.mo.gov/divisions/aircraft-division/aircraft-division.

Table D1
Aviation Asset Information and Policies in Selected States
Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
Nebraska	Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics, Flight Operations[155]	1 airplane	State agencies, University of Nebraska, state colleges and various boards and commissions for official travel.	Monthly usage reports published on DOT website, include passenger log, trip purpose, destination and miles/duration; available from July 2024 through September 2026.[156]
Nevada	Department of Transportation[157]	2 airplanes	Primarily for NDOT employee use; other state agencies may use.	
New Jersey	State Police Special Operations Section Aviation Bureau[158]	8 helicopters	Primarily for State Police, other agencies may request airborne assistance in accomplishing their mission.	
New Mexico	General Services Department Transportation Services Division Aviation Services Bureau	1 airplane	Transportation for state agencies, including medical services; elected or appointed state officials, persons acting on behalf of on in the service of the state, its political subdivisions or institutions (in any official capacity that directly adds to the furtherance of state business); executive transport limited primarily to essential services or cost-effectiveness.[159]	Proposed passenger list to be submitted in advance identify the passengers role in travel prior to flight; Charges only fuel costs for use of plane.

[155] "Aeronautics," *Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT)*, https://dot.nebraska.gov/aeronautics/.
[156] "State-Owned Aircraft Monthly Usage Report Page," NDOT, https://dot.nebraska.gov/aeronautics/state-owned-aircraft-monthly-usage-report-page/.
[157] No information found on the official Nevada Department of Transportation website; news articles from 2019 and 2022 describe assets and policies. Robert Lauer, "Governor Steve Sisolak Hasn't Flown in Two Planes NDOT Purchased for $14 Million," *The Nevada Globe*, February 28, 2022, https://thenevadaglobe.com/articles/governor-steve-sisolak-hasnt-flown-in-two-planes-ndot-purchased-for-14-million/. FAA only lists three helicopters registered to the State of Nevada.
[158] "Special Operations Section, Aviation Bureau," *New Jersey State Police*, https://njsp.njoag.gov/aviation-bureau/.
[159] "Transportation Services Division, Aviation Services Bureau," *New Mexico General Services Department (NMGSD)*, https://generalservices.state.nm.us/transportation-services/aviation-services-bureau/; "Policy and Guidelines for Use of State Aircraft," *NMGSD*, updated November 5, 2015, https://generalservices.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/11052015-Use-of-State-Aircraft.pdf.

Table D1
Aviation Asset Information and Policies in Selected States
Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
New York	New York State Police Aviation Unit	4 helicopters 4 airplanes	Governor, Lt. Gov, designees, aides, staff, and security detail; professional support; primary purpose must be for a bona-fide State purpose; Gov. & Lt. Gov. immediate family members; designated non-State person if in furtherance of a bona-fide State purpose.[160]	Monthly reports can be found on Governor's website covering 2021 through June 2025. Reports include aircraft, passengers, and state purposes[161]
North Carolina	Department of Transportation, Division of Aviation	2 twin-engine aircraft	Transporting government officials on state business.[162]	
North Dakota	Department of Transportation	3 airplanes	DOT and other state agencies to travel longer distances.	Data for a 2024 market analysis included some flight information, but not passenger logs from 2017-2021.[163]
Ohio	Department of Transportation	2 airplanes	Governor, Lt. Governor, other state officials.	2023 news article complained about lack of data for flights.[164]

[160] "Executive Chamber Policy on Executive Use of State Aircraft," *New York State Executive Chamber*, February 9, 2022, https://ko.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/Executive_Chamber_Aircraft_Policy.pdf
[161]Governor of New York, https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2026-08/June2025.pdf. Flight logs found by searching "aircraft" on the www.governor.ny.gov website.
[162] "Sections & Units," *North Carolina Department of Transportation*, last updated April 5, 2022. https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/aviation/Pages/sections-units.aspx.
[163] "Market Intelligence Report prepared for the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT)," 2023. https://ndlegis.gov/sites/default/files/committees/68-2023/25.5104.02000presentation1030.pdf and Michael Achterling, "2 state-owned airplanes may be updated," North Dakota Monitor, March 20, 2024. https://northdakotamonitor.com/2024/03/20/2-state-owned-airplanes-may-be-upgraded/.
[164] Staff Report, "DeWine travels state in million dollar plane, often away from public view," *Y-City News*, September 20, 2023, https://ycitynews.com/25532/news/dewine-travels-state-in-million-dollar-plane-often-away-from-public-view/.

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Aviation Asset Information and Policies in Selected States
Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
Oklahoma	Department of Transportation	1 airplane	Governor, Lt. Governor, other state officials; immediate family members of Gov & Lt. Gov.; restrictions on political events, paid appearances.	Use of state aircraft statute includes detailed Travel Use Log.[165]
South Carolina	Aeronautics Commission State Aircraft Program	2 airplanes[166]	In support of official government business; Governor, Lt. Gov, members of General Assembly, constitutional officers, cabinet agencies, state agencies and institutions, other governmental entities authorized by law.[167]	Passenger manifests and flight records publics on SCAC website from 2018 through 2026.[168]
South Dakota	Department of Transportation Office of Aeronautics Services and Aeronautics Commission	3 airplanes, 2 available for executive transport[169]	When state aircraft being used in the conduct of necessary activities of DOT, can operate for other departments, with reimbursement.[170]	

[165] 74 OK Stat. § 74-500.6A (2025).
[166] "About Us, What We Do, Flight Department Staff," *South Carolina Aeronautics Commission (SCAC)*, https://aeronautics.sc.gov/about-us/what-we-do; Also see SC Code §55-5-80, State Aeronautical Regulatory Act.
[167] "South Carolina State Aircraft Program Overview," *SCAC*, https://aeronautics.sc.gov/state-aircraft-program-overview.
[168] "Flight Logs and Manifests," *SCAC*, https://aeronautics.sc.gov/flight-logs.
[169] Joshua Haiar, "Talks underway about state airplane purchase as new law requires consultation with expert panel," *South Dakota Searchlight*, March 25, 2026, https://southdakotasearchlight.com/2026/03/25/talks-underway-about-state-airplane-purchase-as-new-law-requires-consultation-with-expert-panel/.
[170] SD Codified Laws § 50-2-15.

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Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
Tennessee	Department of Transportation Aeronautics Division, Flight Services Section[171]	1 airplane	Flight services provided to all branches of state government in the interest of state business. Transportation prioritized: Governor, then Governor's Cabinet, industrial development and recruitment activities and other state business.[172]	Aeronautics Division maintains logbooks and bill requesting agency.
Texas	Department of Transportation Aviation Division, Flight Services	7 airplanes	Transport for state and federal officials, employees and government contractors.[173]	
Utah	Department of Transportation Aeronautics Division	2 airplanes[174]	Governor and all State agencies.[175]	
Virginia	Department of Aviation Flight Operations Division	4 airplanes	Administration and other agencies to conduct their business; preemptive authority to Governor or VA Economic Development Partnership.[176]	Reimbursement from agencies using service at an hourly rate. Logs available under FOIA policy.[177]

[171] "Aeronautics Division. Tennessee Department of Transportation," *Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)*, https://www.tn.gov/tdot/aeronautics.html.
[172] "Guidelines for Use of State Aircraft," *TDOT,* November 15, 2005, https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/documents/Plane_usage_guide.pdf.
[173] "Aircraft travel for official state business," *Texas Department of Transportation, Aviation Division Flight Services,* https://www.txdot.gov/business/aviation/aircraft-official-state-business.html. See also Texas Government Code Chapter 2205, known as the State Aircraft Pooling Act.
[174] Plans were announced to replace the two existing planes with a single new plane. "Plane and Simple: Budgeting for the State Air Fleet," *Utah State Legislature*, December 1, 2023, https://budget.utah.gov/plane-and-simple//.
This has not been done; instead, Utah acquired a hybrid electric aircraft that is being tested under its uFLy initiative. "Utah Takes Flight with Historic Hybrid Electric Aircraft," *Utah Department of Transportation*, August 7, 2026, https://employeeresources.udot.utah.gov/news/archive-news/august-2026/utah-takes-flight-with-historic-hybrid-electric-aircraft.
[175] "Plane and Simple: Budgeting for the State Air Fleet," *Utah State Legislature*, December 1, 2023, https://budget.utah.gov/plane-and-simple/.
[176] "Executive Air Service," *Virginia Department of Aviation*, https://doav.virginia.gov/exec_air_service/.
[177] "Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Policy," Virginia Department of Aviation, https://doav.virginia.gov/foia-policy/.

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Based on Available Information October 2026

State	Agencies with Aircraft	Inventory	Authorized Users	Transparency
Washington	State Patrol Aviation Section, Special Operations Division, Executive Service Section	6 airplanes[178]	Transportation services in support of the Patrol's public safety mission. One airplane used to transport Governor according to news reports.[179]	
West Virginia	Aviation Division	1 airplane 3 helicopters	Access and usage limit to state agencies and the legislature; cannot be used when no State interest is served.[180]	
Wisconsin	Department of Administration Air Services	2 airplanes	Governor, State and University officials and employees delivering public services statewide.[181]	
Wyoming	Department of Transportation Aeronautics Division Flight Operations Program	2 airplanes	Elected officials, member of public boards and commissions, and state agency employees performing official state business.[182]	

[178] "2020 Annual Report: Special Operations Division," *Washington State Patrol*, .https://wsp.wa.gov/2020-sod-ar.
[179] KOMO News Staff, "Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson fined for improper use of state aircraft for personal travel," *KOMO News*, May 11, 2026. https://komonews.com/news/local/governor-bob-ferguson-fined-for-improper-use-of-state-aircraft-for-personal-travel-seattle-washington-state-patrol-plane-flight-hour-billing-employee-ethics-taxpayer-funded-investigation.
[180] "Aviation Division," *West Virginia Aviation Division*, https://www.wv.gov/agencies/aviation-division and "Our Mission," *West Virginia Aviation Division,* https://aviation.wv.gov.
[181] "Wisconsin Air Services," *Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA)*, https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/AboutDOA/Wisconsin-Air-Services-Program.aspx and "State Travel Management," *Wisconsin Division of Personnel Management*, https://dpm.wi.gov/Documents/BCER/Compensation/Section%20F.pdf.
[182] "Flight Operations Program," *Wyoming Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division*, https://www.dot.state.wy.us/home/aeronautics/flight_ops.html.

As of October 1, 2026, the Commonwealth owns and operates five planes and five helicopters, including one plane within PennDOT, one plane with OAG, and the remainder within PSP. Total estimated operational and storage costs for those aircraft (including fuel, maintenance, hangar leases, personnel, and other minor costs) were nearly $15 million in FY 2025-26.

Senate Resolution 89 of 2025 directed the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) to study State-owned aircraft and aviation assets and provide findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. Those findings and recommendations are included below.

- **Public transparency of the use of the state plane could be increased.** PennDOT flight logs required by 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (b)(10) require the public purpose of the trip. In nearly all cases, the flight logs list the purpose as "business." If policymakers believe the public purpose of the trip should be clearer, 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(b)(10) could be updated to clarify the language.

  As an example in another state, Oklahoma requires that someone requesting use of the state plane fill out a Travel Use Log form, including,

  4. The purpose of each landing during a trip, including but not limited to whether the landing is:
     a. For the purpose of giving a speech or other presentation,
     b. For attendance at a meeting, event, or other gathering, or
     c. For the performance of a service
  5. The name of the group sponsoring the speech, presentation, meeting, event, or gathering, or receiving the services specified in paragraph 4 of this subsection[183]

  The Travel Use Log forms in Oklahoma "are maintained and made available upon request pursuant to the provisions of the Oklahoma Open Records Act."[184] *See pages 34-35 for a more complete discussion of this issue.*

- **Clarification on how much agencies should be charged for the use of the state plane may be needed.** 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302 (a) states that "…all ordinary and necessary expenses for the use of such aircraft…" shall be charged by PennDOT to the agency using the aircraft. PennDOT currently charges $1,350/block (flight) hour plus overtime expenses incurred by the pilots, including pilot meals, overnight accommodations for pilots, facility fees, and de-icing fees. PennDOT staff noted that the block hour rate is

[183] 74 O.S. § 500.6B.
[184] 74 O.S. § 500.6C.

intended to cover the cost of fuel and parts, maintenance, engine, and propeller reserves, not the entire cost of the Department's flight operations.

It could be argued that the Department's total flight-operation costs could be included as "all ordinary and necessary expenses" for using the state aircraft. For example, hangar lease payments and other typical personnel costs could be included in the billed costs. If the entire cost of PennDOT's flight operations is included over the last five fiscal years, the cost billed to agencies represented a little over a third of the total cost of flight operations. If the legislative intent of 74 Pa.C.S. § 5302(a) is to bill all state plane costs to agencies using the state plane, then the statute could be updated to clarify exactly what costs should be included in the reimbursement. *See pages 35-36 for a more complete discussion of this issue.*

- **Agencies should reimburse PSP if the PSP plane is used instead of the PennDOT state plane.** If agencies use the PSP plane for air transportation (excluding specific PSP-directly related business), they should be required to reimburse PSP for the cost of those flights similar to what occurs with the PennDOT state plane. *See pages 37-38 and 40-41 for a more complete discussion of this issue.*

- **All three agencies (PennDOT, PSP and OAG) noted different reasons why leasing or sharing of aircraft with outside organizations would not be a viable alternative or would not save money.** *See pages 44-45 for more discussion of this issue*.

- **Any passenger not covered by the Commonwealth's blanket travel accident policy should be required to sign a waiver to limit the Commonwealth's liability in the event of an aircraft accident.** There is a question on whether or not the Commonwealth's blanket travel accident policy that provides accidental death and dismemberment, emergency medical benefits and evacuation benefits, and repatriation of remains benefits would apply to family members of state employees traveling on the state aircraft. *See pages 45-46 for more discussion of this issue*.

- **PennDOT, PSP, and policymakers should review the feasibility of moving the state plane and the mission of the state plane under PSP jurisdiction.** Since the PennDOT state plane and PSP aircraft both provide transportation services to the Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's Offices, and these two offices already account for over half of the flights the PennDOT plane provides, these duplicative services might be better served under one agency to save on some administrative costs and possibly allow the state plane to be used by PSP when not transporting state officials. *See page 46 for more discussion of this issue.*

PRINTER'S NO. 683

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 89 Session of 2025

INTRODUCED BY PENNYCUICK, COLEMAN, ROTHMAN, PHILLIPS-HILL, VOGEL, STEFANO AND MARTIN, APRIL 28, 2025

REFERRED TO TRANSPORTATION, APRIL 28, 2025

A RESOLUTION

Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct an assessment, inventory and analysis of State-owned aircraft and aviation assets and provide recommendations for increased efficiency and cost savings.

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth owns a substantial number of aircraft and aviation assets, housed under various departments, including the Department of Transportation, the Office of Attorney General and the Pennsylvania State Police; and

WHEREAS, Each department utilizes these aircraft and aviation assets for distinct missions and operational needs, leading to a variety of management practices and asset types; and

WHEREAS, These aircraft and aviation assets represent robust and valuable resources that must be used as efficiently and effectively as possible; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that the Commonwealth continually evaluate the management of State-owned aircraft and aviation assets to ensure maximum efficiency, cost-effectiveness and benchmarking with industry best practices; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive inventory and review of the

Commonwealth's aircraft and aviation assets may reveal opportunities to reduce costs, streamline operations and enhance service delivery to the departments and improve accountability and transparency for nonessential, noninvestigative purposes of the aircraft and aviation assets; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a comprehensive study and analysis of State-owned aircraft and aviation assets, including an examination of best practices in other states and in the private sector, where applicable; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the study include, at a minimum:

(1) a review of each department's current air assets, including, airplanes, helicopters, hangars and pilots;

(2) a review of aircraft operational requirements and the missions of individual departments of the Commonwealth, including a review of compliance with any applicable Federal regulatory reporting requirements, airplane and helicopter usage, operational procedures, training programs and insurance policies;

(3) an assessment of overall costs to taxpayers, including maintenance expenses and storage fees; and

(4) an evaluation of insurance, purchasing practices, maintenance operations and a comparison of leasing versus owning these aviation assets, for cost savings;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the study include recommendations to improve existing law, increase the efficiency and operations of the Commonwealth's aircraft and aviation assets and identify opportunities to reduce costs; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a

report of its findings, along with any recommendations, to the General Assembly within 12 months of the adoption of this resolution.

APPENDIX B

July 27, 2023 Memorandum

The picture below is a memorandum provided by PennDOT to Commission staff. The agency staff also provided Attachment A noted in the memorandum.

Date: July 27, 2023

Subject: Operation and Use of Commonwealth Aircraft

To: Cabinet Members and Senior Staff

From: Dana Fritz
Chief of Staff

Priority of Requests to Use Commonwealth Aircraft

The Governor shall have priority in the use of Commonwealth aircraft. The Lieutenant Governor shall have the next priority. Statewide elected Commonwealth Officials, members of the Governor's Cabinet and Senior Staff, Board and Commission Chairpersons and legislative leadership will be considered next in priority with the Governor's Chief of Staff's approval. All other flight requests will be last in priority and must be approved by the respective agency head or by a deputy secretary or equivalent senior agency manager on a first come, first serve basis.

Use of Commonwealth Aircraft

Commonwealth aircraft are to be used when necessary for Commonwealth business as determined by the requesting agency upon consideration of cost and need. Further information regarding the criteria for use, costs, and logistics of booking are contained in Attachment A to this memo. Please be guided accordingly. Direct any questions to your chief counsel or PennDOT's Chief Counsel at: (717) 787-5473; or by email at: RA-PDOCCEXECUTIVE@pa.gov.

Attachment A

Criteria for Use of Commonwealth Aircraft

The Commonwealth airplane is to be used when necessary for Commonwealth business as determined by the agency requesting use following an internal evaluation that shows the aircraft is cost effective (as compared to other modes of transportation and commercially available flights) or otherwise necessary to conduct Commonwealth business. Justification supporting the use of the airplane must be documented in writing on the PennDOT form AV-18, a copy of which must be maintained by the requesting agency. Relevant factors justifying use of Commonwealth airplane include:

- Commercial airlines do not meet transportation requirements for one of the following reasons:
    - Commercial flights are not available to reach the travel destination;
    - Commercial flights do not accommodate the travel time constraints of Commonwealth official(s) or employee(s); or
    - Commercial flights cannot accommodate the travel team's needs to conduct Commonwealth business en route.
- Travel by vehicle or other modes of transportation do not accommodate meeting schedule/time constraints, particularly where travel is more than a 2.5 hour drive from Harrisburg.
- Security, threat level, or operational requirements preclude use of commercial airlines or other forms of transportation, including use in emergency and disaster response situations.

Costs for Use of Commonwealth Aircraft

PennDOT maintains a fee schedule for the Commonwealth airplane. The base cost for the use is $1,350.00 per block hour. A block hour is the elapsed time from when the airplane door is closed until it is opened at the destination. Additional charges include pilot charges consisting of the individual pilot salary per block hour, subject to overtime, subsistence and pilot lodging when applicable. Additional costs include incidental fees including without limitation landing, hangar and de-icing fees.

The Department will revise the fees charged periodically to reflect the costs associated with operating and maintaining the Commonwealth airplane. An agency, board, commission or legislative entity which cancels a flight after the airplane and pilot have been mobilized, will be charged for any actual time flown, as well as any expenses incidental thereto. Payment for charges to an agency, board, commission or legislative entity that has been provided aircraft services will become due upon receipt of charges and the using agency will be responsible for providing all details to PennDOT necessary to meet its statutory obligation to maintain a public facing flight log. The Governor's office may at their discretion bill any agency for airplane usage, in part or in whole, if the Governor is acting on its behalf.

Booking Commonwealth Aircraft Use

Requests to schedule use of Commonwealth aircraft start with completion of PennDOT form AV-18 at least 48 hours in advance of the flight. Approved aircraft use is set forth on a Microsoft Outlook calendar that displays the aircraft schedule. The calendar can be found at PD, FS Aircraft Schedule. Access to the calendar is available to scheduling personnel after requesting to have the calendar shared through Microsoft Outlook.

Additional Considerations

Efforts will be made to accommodate simultaneous needs and flights will be consolidated to that end. Competing needs or needs exceeding available aircraft will be resolved by the Governor, who may consider the use of chartered flights, as determined necessary and economically feasible. Notwithstanding any provision in this policy to the contrary, emergency and disaster response uses of Commonwealth aircraft, as determined by the Governor, will take precedence over any planned use of Commonwealth aircraft.

APPENDIX C

AV-18 (12-15) Flight Request Form

The following is a form Commonwealth agency staff complete if they are interested in using the PennDOT aircraft.[185]

[185] Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Last accessed August 4, 2026. https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/penndot/documents/public/pubsforms/forms/av-18.pdf

AV-18 (12-15)

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
www.penndot.gov

FLIGHT REQUEST FORM

REQUESTING AGENCY:	DATE:

By your signature you approve this flight request and certify that the flight is for the conduct of official Commonwealth business.
APPROVED BY:

Signature (Deputy Secretary or above) _____ Title _____

Passengers (List lead passenger first.)	Comm. Emp?	Agency/Company	Title
1.	YES ☐ NO ☐		
2.	YES ☐ NO ☐		
3.	YES ☐ NO ☐		
4.	YES ☐ NO ☐		
5.	YES ☐ NO ☐		
6.	YES ☐ NO ☐		
7.	YES ☐ NO ☐		
8.	YES ☐ NO ☐		
9.	YES ☐ NO ☐		

Departure Date	Departure City	Destination City	Desired Time
			_____ Arrival ☐ _____ Departure ☐
			_____ Arrival ☐ _____ Departure ☐
			_____ Arrival ☐ _____ Departure ☐
			_____ Arrival ☐ _____ Departure ☐
			_____ Arrival ☐ _____ Departure ☐
			_____ Arrival ☐ _____ Departure ☐

Official Purpose of Flight:

Please check applicable Usage Considerations/Justifications for use of state aircraft:

☐ Use of Commonwealth aircraft is cost effective compared with commercial airline transportation and/or ground transportation, taking all travel-related costs into consideration.

☐ Commercial airlines do not meet transportation requirements.
a. Commercial flights are not available to reach the travel destination.
b. Commercial flights do not accommodate the travel time constraints of Commonwealth official(s) or employee(s).
c. Travel team must conduct Commonwealth business enroute.

☐ Travel by vehicle does not accommodate meeting schedule/time constraints.

☐ Security, threat level, or operational requirements preclude use of commercial airlines or other forms of transportation. (Anticipate use in emergency and disaster situations only.)

☐ Other:

This form must be submitted to the Flight Services Section prior to the requested flight date as an Outlook Calendar Request to PD, FS Aircraft Schedule.

OAG DIRECTIVE 523

	COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA **Office of Attorney General** **Criminal Law Division** **Criminal Investigations**	
	DIRECTIVE: 523	By Direction of: John Kitzinger, Chief of Investigations
SUBJECT		
Aviation Support – Manned and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS/Drones)		
DATE OF ISSUE	EFFECTIVE DATE	EXPIRATION DATE
October 23, 2023	October 23, 2023	
PLEAC STANDARD REFERENCE		

523.1 PURPOSE

To establish a uniform written policy governing approval for utilization of specialized aviation support provided by the Office of Attorney General to include manned and unmanned aviation assets. The aviation support will include, but not be limited to, the following services:

1. Aerial support of vehicle tracking and tracking devices.

2. Aerial surveillance of suspects' residence(s), business or other pertinent location(s), including still photographs, thermal imaging, and/or video recording of the same.

3. Aerial surveillance in support of law enforcement investigations.

4. Transport of personnel or equipment when justified by operational need, and emergency transport of court orders or other documents. (Manned)

5. Transport of the Attorney General and other agency employees when other modes of transportation are not practical or in emergency situations as required. (Manned)

6. Search and Rescue Operations as assigned by PEMA/FEMA/AFRCC or other government agencies.

7. Civil Unrest as assigned by PEMA or other government agencies

8. Community Outreach demonstrations and events

9. Homeland Security Operations

523.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Office of Attorney General to utilize manned and unmanned aviation assets to enhance the agency's ability to save lives, protect property, obtain evidence, and document crime scenes. Any application of the aviation assets will be in accordance with federal, state, and local laws, to include constitutional privacy rights, search and seizure regulations and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

523.3 SCOPE

A. This policy will apply to all requests for aviation support made within the Office of Attorney General. Aviation support is available for Criminal Investigations, other Bureaus and Sections of the Office of Attorney General (OAG), Municipal Police Drug Task Forces and outside law enforcement agencies.

B. The Aviation Unit will have the primary responsibility for providing aviation support for investigations and operations. The Aviation Unit will evaluate the request and determine the conveyance to be used, i.e., OAG Aviation, Pennsylvania State Police Aviation, or National Guard Counterdrug Aviation.

523.4 DEFINITION

A. Manned Aircraft- any aircraft that is carrying or being operated by one or more persons onboard the aircraft.

B. Unmanned Aerial System (UAS)- an unmanned aircraft of any type that is capable of sustaining flight, whether remotely controlled or preprogrammed and all the supporting or attached hardware designed for gathering information through photography, video recording or any other means. UAS's are also commonly referred to as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) or drones.

523.5 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Manned OAG Aviation personnel who maintain current pilot licenses and are current and qualified in the aircraft will have the responsibility to provide such aviation support, utilizing OAG, Pennsylvania State Police, or National

Guard Counterdrug Aviation, depending upon aircraft availability and the requirements of the support mission. OAG UAS operations will be conducted by personnel who successfully completed the required FAA 14 CFR Part 107 training UAS – Remote Pilot in Command (PIC).

1. All personnel will comply with FAA regulations and policies and procedures outlined in the OAG Manned and Unmanned Aviation Unit Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

2. All agents that have approval for aviation missions will adhere to policy and procedures as outlined in accordance to this Directive.

3. All personnel that have approval for aviation missions will adhere to instructions provided by the Pilot-in-Command of the mission.

B. The OAG Manned and Unmanned Aviation Unit SOP will be maintained by the Aviation Director, Training Officer, and Safety Officer.

C. Upon completion of a mission, the Pilot-in-Command will prepare a post flight report including agency supported, arrests, and seizures made IAW with the Aviation Unit SOP. This report will be stored in a permanent aviation support log maintained by the Aviation Unit.

D. The Tactical Flight Officer (TFO) or UAS pilot will be responsible for securing and storing video evidence and transferring the evidence to the requesting agency in accordance with Manned and Unmanned SOP.

E. For all flights including all missions, maintenance flights, crew training and equipment testing, the pilot will obtain flight approval from the Aviation Director or unit Trainer.

523.7 PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING AVIATION SUPPORT

A. All requests shall be submitted to the Aviation Director via e-mail at aviation@attorneygeneral.gov or by phone in situations of an immediate need to determine the availability of the aircraft and crew. Requesting agencies/agents shall use as much advance notice as possible when requesting aviation assets.

1. It is the responsibility of the requesting agent to notify their supervisory chain of command of the request.

2. The Aviation Unit will review the request and determine what resources will better accommodate the mission, fixed-wing, rotary-wing, or UAS.

3. The requesting party is responsible for providing pertinent information or an Operations Plan (OP PLAN) in regards to the case in a timely manner to the Aviation Unit.

   a. If the Aviation Unit does not have the assets to provide aviation support or determines that the State Police or National Guard resources will better accommodate the mission, the aviation request will be forwarded through the respective Coordinator.