

MBEP Secures \$7.4M to Build California's First FAA-Compliant Multi-Airport Flight Corridor Network on the Central Coast

State Investment Will Accelerate a Rapidly Expanding Sector That Will Create Good-Paying Jobs and Drive Economic Growth Across the Monterey Bay Region

MARINA, CA, UNITED STATES, August 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The California Jobs First Council has awarded a \$7,450,000 grant to the [Monterey Bay Economic Partnership](#) (MBEP) on behalf of the Monterey Bay Tech Hub to expand the Central Coast's advanced air mobility (AAM) ecosystem, which will include uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) and drones. This award, made through the state's California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative Implementation Phase Round One, will accelerate growth in one of the tri-county's most dynamic and critical sectors: Space, Defense, and Satellites.



MAJOR WIN FOR THE CENTRAL COAST!

On behalf of the Monterey Bay Tech Hub MBEP has secured **\$7.45M** to launch California's first FAA-compliant multi-airport advanced air mobility corridor — bringing jobs, clean transportation, and new opportunities to our region.



 **Monterey Bay**
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

 **MONTEREY BAY**
TECH HUB
Advancing Opportunities

In Partnership with
 **CALIFORNIA**
JOBS FIRST

MBEP Secures Nearly \$7.5 Million to Develop AAM Flight Corridor Network

The California Advanced Air Mobility Corridors Initiative (CAAMCI) is positioned to establish California's first FAA-compliant, multi-airport flight corridor network, connecting the rural public airports of Watsonville, Marina, Salinas, and Hollister. This integrated corridor will support the testing, certification, and commercialization of clean-energy aircraft for passenger, cargo, defense, and next-generation drone operations. By combining advanced infrastructure with workforce training and innovation pipelines, CAAMCI will position the Central Coast as a statewide and national leader in advanced air mobility, defense, and aerospace technologies — unlocking inclusive economic growth and new opportunities for rural communities.

"The development of an FAA-compliant multi-airport test corridor will be transformational for

the Monterey Bay region, already at the forefront of innovation in electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and drone technology that is revolutionizing many aspects of our day-to-day lives,” said Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) President and CEO Tahra Goraya. “The California Advanced Air Mobility Corridors Initiative (CAAMCI) charts a clear path forward for how we can embrace the full AAM potential of the Monterey Bay and bring the kind of jobs that will help our regional economy thrive.”

The Monterey Bay region is already a leader in advanced air mobility and drone technology, boasting the nation's highest concentration of companies in the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) sector. Startups such as Joby Aviation, Wisk, Archer, Parallel Flight, Elroy Air, and Guardian Agriculture are pioneering advanced air mobility (AAM) technologies such as electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS), commonly known as drones, establishing the Central Coast as a national hub for aerospace innovation. While these leading-edge companies currently utilize a string of public general aviation airports, those rural airports lack the connected infrastructure needed to scale to take the industry sector to the next level of competitiveness. By connecting rural airports to create a coordinated flight network, CAAMCI closes this crucial infrastructure gap.



Monterey Bay Economic
Partnership CEO & President
Tahra Goraya

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*Lavera Alexander, Chief
Growth Officer & CAAMCI
Lead*

“Tahra’s visionary, collaborative leadership — rooted in fierce advocacy for the Central Coast and an unshakable commitment to our communities — set the tone for our success,” said Lavera Alexander, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) Chief Growth Officer and CAAMCI Lead. “I’m grateful she entrusted me to lead the proposal and represent the Monterey Bay Tech Hub and CAAMCI at the California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative Pitch Summit, securing a transformative investment for Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties. This funding positions our majority-minority region as a national leader in advanced air mobility — fueling innovation, attracting industry partners, and opening doors for the next

generation of talent.”

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No other region in California combines eVTOL vehicle development, hydrogen-fueled passenger aircraft, and hybrid “heavy payload” drones with such potential to transform industries — from delivering medical supplies to rural areas, to monitoring wildfire conditions in real time, to improving crop production, to inspecting bridges and power lines without risking human life. The economic, social, and environmental possibilities are extensive. By connecting Watsonville, Marina, Salinas, and Hollister airports to create an FAA-compliant flight corridor network, CAAMCI will establish a scalable ecosystem that accelerates competitiveness, creates quality jobs, and attracts federal, private, and philanthropic investment through regional coordination.

CAAMCI builds on MBEP’s leadership in shaping and advancing regional economic strategies that identify Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) as a strategic opportunity for California’s Central Coast:

- The state-sanctioned Central Coast Advanced Air Mobility Activation Plan
- [Uplift Central Coast Coalition/California Jobs First Economic Blueprint](#) identifies AAM as a priority target sector likely to spur growth, innovation, and access to good-paying jobs over the next decade.
- The Regions Rise Together Investment Blueprint 1.0 and 2.0 highlights key priority areas and identifies areas of investment for interested public and private partners.

“We’re excited about the promise of CAAMCI and its ability to power the future of aviation on the Central Coast and across the great state of California,” stated Goraya.

To learn more about CAAMCI and other [California Jobs First investments](#), read the state’s press release.

About Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP): Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) is a regional member-supported nonprofit organization consisting of public, private, and civic entities located throughout the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. Founded in 2015, our mission is to improve the economic health and quality of life in the region.

About Monterey Bay Tech Hub: MBEP co-founded the Monterey Bay Tech Hub with UC Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay DART to build on regional momentum in advancing workforce training, regional ground-based infrastructure, and policy frameworks that support agtech, drones, electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, and hydrogen-fueled aviation. As a coalition of regional stakeholders, the Monterey Bay Tech Hub recognizes the need for collective action to strengthen the opportunity for Advanced Air Mobility-based economic growth and job creation. Among those supporting this regional consortium are industry leaders, higher education institutions, the military, municipal leadership, municipal airports, and community organizations.

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