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Legislation

COLORADO APPOINTS FIRST COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO STATE AERONAUTICAL BOARD

[The Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA) issued the following news release on April 2.]

In a landmark move for community inclusion, the Colorado Senate convened on March 25, 2025, and confirmed Brianna Lehman and Kevin Ryan to the Colorado Aeronautical Board (CAB), highlighting the state's growing commitment to addressing the needs of communities impacted by general aviation.

Lehman, of Lafayette, CO, and Ryan, of Superior, CO, are the first residents from aviation-impacted communities to be appointed to the board – marking a historic step toward more representative aviation policy.

"We applaud the Colorado Aeronautical Board for this landmark step. For the first time, community voices have a seat at the table, and we're encouraged to see thoughtful, qualified individuals like Brianna Lehman and Kevin Ryan representing those impacted by aviation. This is a strong model for other states to follow", said Darlene Yaplee, President and Co-Founder of the Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA), an organization of over 90 advocacy groups nationwide.

These appointments follow the passage of House Bill 24-1235, "Reduce Aviation Impacts on Communities", signed into law by Governor Jared Polis on May 17, 2024. The legislation expanded the CAB from seven to nine voting members and added an ex officio, nonvoting seat for a representative from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Crucially, it mandates the inclusion of two board members who reside in communities significantly affected by noise and lead emissions from airports with high general aviation activity.

Brianna Lehman, appointed for a one-year term, brings years of grassroots advocacy and in-depth research on lead exposure and aviation-related safety issues. A member of the Save Our Skies Alliance, she co-authored a Federal Register comment on the FAA's modernization of pilot schools (Docket ID: FAA-2024-2531), in collaboration with the Aviation-Impacted Communities Alliance (AICA) and Groton Ayer Buzz. The comment was endorsed by both the University Aviation Association (UAA) and the National Air Transportation Association (NATA).

Kevin Ryan, who begins a three-year term, joins the board with a strong local perspective from his hometown of Superior.

Both Lehman and Ryan were selected in alignment with the bill's directive to prioritize candidates who are not trained pilots, have knowledge of aviation and infrastructure, and represent communities disproportionately impacted by general aviation.

The board, originally established in 1988, oversees aviation development across the state. With the passage of HB24-1235, CAB's mission now explicitly includes balancing aviation advancement with public health and environmental justice.