

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: April 11, 2024

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso *KET for*
Chief Legislative Analyst

Assignment No: 24-03-0193

SUBJECT: Leaded Aviation Gasoline

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Rodriguez – Padilla, Krekorian) to include in the City’s 2023-2024 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for SB 1193 (Menjivar), which would prohibit the sale of leaded aviation gasoline by January 1, 2030, at latest.

SUMMARY

SB 1193 (Menjivar), introduced on February 14, 2024, would prohibit airport operators and aviation retail establishments from selling and distributing leaded aviation gasoline to consumers based on a specified timeline, with January 1, 2030 being the latest effective date of the prohibition. The bill would further require the State Department of Transportation, in consultation with the State Department of Public Health and the California Environmental Protection Agency, to identify best management practices for reducing exposures to lead associated with airport operations. Further, it would require airport operators to submit a plan to implement best practices to minimize environmental health impacts and public health risks associated with leaded aviation gasoline use at airports.

The Resolution recommends that the City support SB 1193 (Menjivar).

BACKGROUND

In October 2023, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) announced its final determination that emissions of lead from aircraft that operate on leaded fuel cause or contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health and welfare under the Clean Air Act. The majority of aircraft that still use leaded fuel are small, piston-engine aircraft that carry fewer than ten passengers. Lead emissions from piston-engine aircraft account for roughly 70 percent of the airborne lead in the United States. There are approximately 200,000 piston-engine aircraft operating in the United States.

The Resolution notes that the deleterious effects of lead exposure are particularly pronounced in children. These include hampered neurocognitive function and hindered brain development, even at low exposure levels. In adults, lead exposure can result in cardiovascular, kidney, and reproductive issues. A study of the Reid-Hillview Airport in Santa Clara found that children who lived less than a mile away from an airport has 21 percent higher levels of lead in their blood than children who lived further away. The California Department of Public Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch performed an analysis of blood lead levels for children under 6 years

old around the Whiteman Airport and did not find an apparent increase in blood lead levels, with 1.75 percent of children around the airport found to have a blood lead level of 3.5 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood compared to 2.26 percent of children above this figure in the rest of Los Angeles County. Regardless of proximity considerations, the California Department of Public Health notes that there is no safe level of lead in children's blood, and that their analysis only categorized blood lead levels as above or below the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's blood lead reference value.

Piston-engine aircraft will typically operate at general aviation airports. There are two general aviation airports in the City of Los Angeles—Van Nuys Airport, operated by Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), and Whiteman Airport, operated by Los Angeles County. As the Resolution notes, LAWA has taken steps to incentivize the use of unleaded aviation fuel at Van Nuys Airport.

In 2022, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and partners launched the Eliminate Aviation Gasoline Lead Emissions (EAGLE) initiative with the goal of, among other things, identifying at least one unleaded fuel acceptable for safe general aviation fleet use. The EAGLE initiative is supported by four pillars: supply chain infrastructure and development; research development and innovation; unleaded fuel evaluation and authorization; and regulation, policy, and programmatic activities.

In 2014, the US EPA established the Piston Engine Aviation Fuels Initiative to support the evaluation of unleaded fuels to replace leaded aviation gasoline. In November 2023, the FAA announced that a new unleaded aviation fuel for piston-engine aircraft would advance to full-scale engine and flight testing. This fuel was the first to pass the Piston Aviation Fuel Initiative's 150-hour engine durability test phase. There is currently unleaded aviation gasoline on the market, but some general aviation aircraft require higher octane than what is currently available unleaded.

On April 9, 2024, SB 1193 was amended to push back the first phase of this transition by one year, from 2026 to 2027. It was also amended to allow an additional one-year extension if 100 octane unleaded aviation gasoline is still not widely commercially available for general aviation aircraft.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

Los Angeles World Airports

BILL STATUS

02/14/24	Introduced
02/21/24	Referred to Committees on Transportation and Judiciary
04/09/24	Amended in the Senate Transportation Committee



Tristan Noack
Analyst

RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles, with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency announced its final determination that emissions from aircraft using leaded aviation cause or contribute to air pollution that may pose a danger to public health and welfare under the Clean Air Act; and

WHEREAS, there are two general aviation airports in the San Fernando Valley, Van Nuys Airport, which is operated by Los Angeles World Airports, and Whiteman Airport in Pacoima, which is owned and operated by Los Angeles County; and

WHEREAS, the communities in close proximity to these airports are defined as disadvantaged under a number of definitions, including Senate Bill 535, CalEnviroScreen, the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screen; and

WHEREAS, the deleterious effects of lead exposure are particularly pronounced in children, including seriously hampered neurocognitive function and hindered brain development, even at low exposure levels; and

WHEREAS, there are 37 schools and daycares located within a mile and a half of the Whiteman Airport, full of children being exposed to harmful neurotoxins from small piston-engine planes using leaded aviation fuel; and

WHEREAS, at Van Nuys Airport, Los Angeles World Airports has taken steps to incentivize the use of unleaded aviation fuel by waiving delivery fees for unleaded aviation fuel, but it is imperative that steps be taken to accelerate the transition away from leaded aviation fuel to protect the vulnerable communities suffering most from its use; and

WHEREAS, SB 1193 (Menjivar), introduced on February 14, 2024, would prohibit an airport operator or aviation retail establishment from selling, distributing, or otherwise making available leaded aviation gasoline to consumers by January 1, 2026 for airports and aviation retail establishments located in or adjacent to a disadvantaged community or a city with a population of at least 700,000 people;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2023-2024 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for SB 1193 (Menjivar), which would prohibit the sale of leaded aviation gasoline by January 1, 2030, at latest.

PRESENTED BY:

MONICA RODRIGUEZ
Councilwoman, 7th District

IMELDA PADILLA

Councilmember, 6th District

SECONDED BY:

Paul K. Korman

FEB 28 2024

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