

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 1228

SPONSOR: Senator Mitchell

SUBJECT: Small Aircraft and Transportation

DATE: February 15, 2002 REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>McAuliffe</u>	<u>Meyer</u>	<u>TR</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	<u>Cooper</u>	<u>Yeatman</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
3.	<u>Fabricant</u>	<u>Hayes</u>	<u>AGG</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
4.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

## I. Summary:

This bill would make Florida a participant along with NASA, the Federal Aviation Administration, the aircraft industry, and various universities in the Small Aircraft Transportation System (SATS) project.

SATS is an integration of new technologies that includes small airplanes with high-tech, user-friendly cockpits, quiet jet propulsion systems working with integrated airports' infrastructure technology to allow precision landings even in inclement weather. SATS strategies are conceived to affect the nature of aviation operational capabilities for airports, airspace, and air traffic and commercial services. The strategy focuses on airborne technologies that expand the use of airports with excess capacity as well as underutilized, unmanaged airspace for transportation use.

## II. Present Situation:

In response to a perceived underutilization of general aviation airports and the overutilization of ground transportation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and state and local aviation development organizations developed SATS. NASA's vision is to use some of the underused airspace to alleviate the overused ground-transportation systems. This would be accomplished through technology that makes flying more user-friendly and competitive with intercity automobile traffic. SATS is an integration of new technologies that includes small airplanes with high-tech, user-friendly cockpits, quiet jet propulsion systems working with integrated airports infrastructure technology to allow precision landings even in inclement weather. This integrated technology requires smaller landing space than conventional airport technology.

SATS technologies target smaller aircraft used for personal and business transportation missions within the infrastructure of smaller airports throughout the nation. These missions include travel by individuals, families, or groups of business associates. Consequently, the aircraft are of similar size to typical automobiles and vans used for non-commercial ground transportation (two to eight seats).

The SATS technology aboard the aircraft is integrated with the airport technology infrastructure. These airports will not require air traffic control towers, and the airspace will not require radar surveillance for air traffic services.

In addition to technologies for the aircraft, SATS strategies are conceived to affect the nature of aviation operational capabilities for airports, airspace, and air traffic and commercial services. The wider SATS vision encompasses inter-modal connectivity between public and private, air and ground modes of travel. In concept, the SATS vision integrates the use of smaller landing facilities with the interstate highway system, intra-city rail transit systems, and hub-and-spoke airports. The strategy focuses on airborne technologies that expand the use of airports with excess capacity as well as underused, unmanaged airspace for transportation use.

The SATS Program was initiated in October 2000 with a \$9 million budget appropriated by Congress for fiscal year 2001 and a total budget of \$69 million for five years. Congress requires a 5-year proof-of-concept research effort. The proof-of-concept program would culminate in a joint NASA/FAA demonstration of SATS operational capabilities. The 5-year program objective is to demonstrate key airborne technologies for precise guidance to virtually any touchdown zone at small airports.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is leading a consortium of public and private sector stakeholders, known as SATSLab, designed to be Florida's (and the Southeast region's) focal point for communication and implementation of NASA's plan to demonstrate the convenience, affordability, and economic benefits of SATS.

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill makes Florida a participant along with NASA, the FAA, the aircraft industry, and various universities in the SATS project. The bill expresses legislative intent language to:

- Improve travel choices, mobility, and accessibility for the citizens of the state;
- Enhance economic growth and competitiveness for the rural and remote communities of the state through improved transportation choices;
- Maintain the state's leadership and proactive role in aviation and aerospace through active involvement in advancing aviation technology infrastructure and capabilities;
- Take advantage of federal programs that can bring investments in technology, research, and infrastructure capable of enhancing competitiveness and opportunities for industry and workforce development;
- Participate in opportunities that can place the state's industries and communities in a first-to-market advantage when developing, implementing, and proving new technologies that have the potential to satisfy requirements of the public good; and

- Participate as partners with NASA, FAA, the aircraft industry, local governments, and those universities comprising SATSLab to implement a SATS infrastructure as a statewide network of airports to support the Florida commitments.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:****A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

Indeterminate.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

Funds from this NASA program would flow directly to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the leader of SATS in the southeast region. Members of SATS have a cost sharing agreement with NASA and are expected to contribute 50% of the total investment. SATS is expected to receive \$2.5 million from NASA in the first year (FY 2002-03) and is expected to contribute \$2.5 million. The Department of Transportation's (DOT) research department is planning on contributing \$1 million (50% state funds and 50% federal funds) in FY 02-03 from their work program (materials and research). This research is expected to yield safer navigation systems for small aircraft when flying in poor weather conditions. DOT's original estimate for research in this area is \$10 million over a four-year period.

The bill does not authorize or require the state or any of its agencies to take any action regarding the SATS project. No funds are appropriated in the bill.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.

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