

SOUTH DAKOTA AERONAUTICS COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. CT

Becker-Hansen Building/ Commission Room – 700 E. Broadway Ave., Pierre, SD 57501

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bob Huggins, Chairman
Ivan Venner
Dustin Coleman
David Howard
Court Ecklund

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

VIA CONFERENCE CALL: Rolf Johnson, Vice-chairman

DOT STAFF PRESENT: Joel Jundt, Kellie Beck, Karla Engle, Jack Dokken, Jon Becker, Brock Antijunti, and Kari Kroll

DOT STAFF PRESENT

VIA CONFERENCE CALL: Ron Hauck

OTHERS PRESENT: Col. Casey Collins – Department of Public Safety (DPS); Secretary Bob Perry – DPS; Maj. Robert Whisler – DPS; Nancy Hoines – American Council of Engineering Companies of South Dakota; and Kristi Turman of Fort Pierre

OTHERS PRESENT

VIA CONFERENCE CALL: Steve Hamilton – Yankton Regional Aviation Association; Dale Knuth – South Dakota Pilots Association; Brooke Edgar – Helms and Associates and Rodd Senn – Mead & Associates

Chairman Huggins called the meeting of the South Dakota Aeronautics Commission (the “Commission”) to order at 2:00 p.m. CDT. Roll call was taken. A quorum was determined.

Huggins opened the floor to the Commission to disclose potential conflicts of interest and to present requests for waiver pursuant to South Dakota Codified Law (SDCL) Chapter 3 – 23.

No members of the Commission disclosed a conflict or requested a waiver.

Huggins asked for a motion to approve November 20, 2025, Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Dustin Coleman noted a typo on page five regarding the final three motions. The minutes were edited to reflect “vote” should be replaced with “voted.”

A MOTION WAS MADE by Howard and seconded by Venner to approve the Commission meeting minutes from November 20, 2025 as edited. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

Huggins opened the floor to public comment.

Kristi Turman of Fort Pierre, daughter of the late South Dakota Highway Patrol pilot David Hansen, gave testimony in support of the Highway Patrol’s proposed purchase of a new aircraft.

Dale Knuth, president of the South Dakota Pilots Association (SDPA), addressed the Commission. He noted the SDPA’s expertise and desire to assist with aviation safety. He noted that the SDPA has seven directors in areas across the state and the SDPA may serve as the eyes and ears at the airports. Knuth expressed SDPA’s interest in clear and direct lines of communication for reporting time critical information, concern about tall structures in the vicinity of airports, and desire to protect critical corridors. Secretary Jundt suggested SDPA report concerns to airport managers and then to the Department of Transportation’s Office of Air, Rail and Transit.

No other members of the public addressed the Commission or offered input.

Secretary Jundt presented the Secretary’s Report. He shared the following items:

- **Federal:** On February 5, 2026, the President signed all but one of the appropriations bills needed to fully fund the federal government and programs. As part of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill, Rapid City Airport was approved to receive a \$20 million in Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) and Sioux Falls Airport was approved to receive \$30 million in CDS. These funds will be made available to the airports for the airport terminal projects.

Regarding FAA funding, the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding remains similar to FY25 amounts with some positive transfer from the general funds and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The FAA should now be able to make decisions on which projects to fund for FY2026.

- **State Legislation:**
 - **SB70 Status:** Sent to the 41st Day by the Senate Transportation Committee
 - The bill would have revised the duties of the Transportation Commission to include responsibilities of the South Dakota Railroad Board and the South Dakota Aeronautics Commission. The goal of the Department was to create a holistic commission by merging the three current boards and commissions into a single body, with representation from each of the current board or commission to include expertise from the different segments of the transportation industry. The State Pilot’s Association, Commissioner Coleman (acting

in his personal capacity) airport managers from Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Hot Springs, and several pilots testified in opposition to the bill. Two primary concerns expressed by the opponents to the bill were the possible dilution of aeronautics interests if there are only two commissioners with aviation experience to provide proper oversight of aviation issues within the State.

SB76 Status: Passed the Senate Commerce and Energy Committee, on to full Senate

- This bill would transfer money from the housing infrastructure fund to the revolving economic development and initiative fund, and to authorize loans from the revolving economic development and initiative fund for airport infrastructure. This bill was extensively amended (hog housed) and now would provide loans (up to \$15 million) to any airport that is within a metropolitan area of 125,000 (Rapid City and Sioux Falls) at 0% interest with a 20-year amortization schedule. The funding would go through South Dakota Housing Authority.

SB205 Status: Passed the Senate, on to the House

- This bill would revise registration fees for drones and establish a fund to support drone aviation. The funds for drone registration currently go into the aeronautics fund and, under this bill, would be diverted to a new fund controlled by the Board of Technical Education for the board's use. Registration fees for drones in last three years amounted to \$70,677 deposited in the aeronautics fund. The amount for the last fiscal year was \$47,277. The Department offered the only testimony in opposition to the bill based on concerns that these revenues provide state funds for the AIP program, which has had issues in the past. In fact, in fiscal year 2021, the Legislature approved \$4 million of general funds to be placed in the aeronautics fund. The diversion of an estimated \$50,000 per year from the aeronautics fund results in the loss of state match for \$2 million per year in federal funds for AIP projects.

SB219 Status: 219B was adopted. Passed Senate Transportation Committee, on to the Senate

- This bill would require that a state agency consult with the Aeronautics Commission when purchasing, transferring, or disposing of a state owned and operated aircraft – including a drone. This bill was amended to eliminate the drone requirement and to exempt the Board of Regents or any institution of higher education if the board determines that the primary use of the aircraft is for educational purposes. The current statute requires the Aeronautics Commission to provide advice and expertise to a state agency regarding the purchase, transfer and disposition of state-owned aircraft. The statute is silent about whether an agency is required to seek such advice. If passed, the amended bill will clearly require certain state agencies to consult with the Aeronautics Commission. In addition, the Aeronautics Commission would be required to provide advice and expertise in a written report to the Governor and the consulting agency.

Colonel Casey Collins presented to the Commission an informational item about the aircraft the Highway Patrol is requesting to purchase.

Karla Engle, Office of Legal Counsel, presented an informational item regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Commission.

Jon Becker, Office of Air, Rail, & Transit, presented an informational item to the Commission regarding the overall process for AIP projects.

Becker also presented an informational item on the proposed AIP/ IJJA projects for 2026 as well as the Capital Improvement (CIP) projects for 2027 – 2029.

With no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Huggins declared the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. CT.