

# **SOUTH DAKOTA AERONAUTICS COMMISSION MEETING**

**Thursday, March 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  
Dustin Coleman  
David Howard  
Court Ecklund

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

**VIA CONFERENCE CALL:** Ivan Venner

**DOT STAFF PRESENT:** Joel Jundt, Kellie Beck, Jack Dokken, Jon Becker, Brock Antijunti, Nancy Hiller, Tom Koch, and Kari Kroll

**DOT STAFF PRESENT**

**VIA CONFERENCE CALL:** Dustin DeBoer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Colonel Casey Collins – Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Secretary Bob Perry – DPS

**OTHERS PRESENT**

**VIA CONFERENCE CALL:** Steve Hamilton – Yankton Regional Aviation Association; Brooke Edgar – Helms and Associates; and Senator Joy Hohn – South Dakota State Legislature

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.

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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.

Commissioner David Howard questioned if he should recuse himself during the agenda item addressing the current Aeronautics Commission policy due to his previously disclosed conflict of interest regarding the Winner Airport.

Commissioner Howard was advised the conversation would be a review of the current Aeronautics Commission policy with no discussions related to a specific airport, and as a result, and his participation in the discussion does not present a conflict but it is his decision whether he should recuse himself.

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

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Huggins asked for a motion to approve February 19, 2026 Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Dustin Coleman noted a typo on page two regarding South Dakota Pilots Association. The minutes were edited to reflect “Associated” should be replaced with “Association.”

A MOTION WAS MADE by Ecklund and seconded by Coleman to approve the Commission meeting minutes from February 19, 2026 as edited. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

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Huggins opened the floor to public comment.

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

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

- **Federal:** The Secretary stated there’s nothing significant to report at the federal level.
- **State:** The State Legislature did approve the Department of Transportation’s (the “Department”) FY2027 budget. Instead of approving the Governor’s recommended budget, the Legislature reduced the Department’s budget authority, specifically in the Construction Funding line item. The budget authority is needed to administer highway, bridge, and airport improvement projects. The budget approved will reduce the Department’s budget authority for this line item by \$20 million, from \$989.6 million to \$969.6 million. Depending on the timing of execution of relevant federal grants and anticipation of when contractors will be doing the work, the Department may need to request additional budget authority to carry out FY2027 projects.

**SB76 Status:** This legislation has been sent to the Governor for signature. The bill will authorize loans from the South Dakota Housing Infrastructure Fund to state airports for airport infrastructure, specifically to Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Loans are capped at \$15 million, with a 2% interest rate and an amortization of 20 years. The loans will be administered by the South Dakota Housing Authority, and the funds will go back into the South Dakota Housing Infrastructure Fund.

**SB219 Status:** This legislation was signed by the Governor. Consistent with the briefing provided to the Commission in February, the bill would require a state agency to consult with the Aeronautics Commission when purchasing, transferring, or disposing of a state owned and operated aircraft – including a drone. This bill was amended twice to eliminate the drone requirement and to exempt the Board of Regents, the Board of Technical Education 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 on the topic, but the statute is silent about whether an agency is required to seek such advice. The amended bill requires certain state agencies to consult with the Commission and, in addition, the Commission will now be required to provide advice and expertise in a written report to the Governor and the consulting agency. The bill will take effect on July 1, 2026.

**SB205 Status:** This bill died in the House. The bill would have revised registration fees for drones and established a fund to support drone aviation. The funds for drone registration currently go into the Aeronautics Fund and, under this bill, would have been diverted to a new fund controlled by the Board of Technical Education (BOTE) for the Board's use. Registration fees for drones in last three years amounted to \$70,677, with the amount for the last fiscal year being \$47,277. The Department lobbied in opposition to the bill based on concerns that these revenues are critical to the Commission for providing state funds for the AIP program. The diversion of an estimated \$50,000 per year from the aeronautics fund would have resulted in the loss of state match for \$2 million per year in federal funds for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) projects. The Secretary advised the Commission, subsequent to this action, he reached out to the Executive Director of the BOTE, Nick Wendell, to inquire whether he would be interested in having discussion with the Aeronautics Commission to discuss whether there are any opportunities for promoting aviation via the BOTE. Mr. Wendell stated the two Technical Colleges -- Lake Area Technical and Mitchell Technical -- could both benefit from any funding that the Commission could help with.

The Commission stated its interest in inviting Mr. Wendell to participate in the next Commission meeting to discuss possible opportunities.

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Secretary Bob Perry from the Department of Public Safety and Colonel Casey Collins of the South Dakota Highway Patrol shared that the legislature passed SB69 giving them \$5 million of funding for the purchase of an aircraft and equipment to replace their current aircraft and equipment. He stated they are looking toward a Kodiak 100 or a Cessna T206. Prior to the scheduled meeting, Colonel Collins provided additional information pursuant to Commissioners' inquiries via email, and he also answered additional technical questions posed by the Commissioners during the meeting.

Commissioner Howard provided advice that they reach out to Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). This nonprofit organization currently flies both types of aircraft that HP is considering and MAF could provide valuable advice as to which aircraft would be a better selection. There was no other advice offered.

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Secretary Jundt presented for the Commission's consideration the current Policy on Funding. He noted that last time it was amended was July 20, 2023. He asked the Commission to review items 9.3 and 10

under Section B of the policy and consider if they'd like to make any edits to the policy based on their current funding balance, specifically regarding contribution of funding for revenue producing projects.

Kellie Beck, Director of Finance & Management Division and Jon Becker, Office of Air, Rail, & Transit, answered Commission questions about the number, types of revenue producing projects anticipated to be completed by the airports in the next three years, and what effect would including these types being eligible for state match have on the overall balance of the Aeronautic fund over the course of the next few years.

Commissioner Dustin Coleman asked if the weather camera practice should be added to the document.

Jon Becker, Office of Air, Rail, & Transit, explained the priority of AIP projects and how revenue producing projects are addressed in the AIP.

Brooke Edgar of Helms and Associates provided comments on airport industry issues and funding challenges as they relate to the current Commission Policy regarding revenue producing projects.

A MOTION WAS MADE by Coleman and seconded by Ecklund to eliminate the first sentence under section 10 of Item B and make it effective as of today. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

The addition of the weather camera to the Policy on Funding will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

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Jundt then asked the Commission to validate designation of Commission members to attend the 2026 Airport Conference on April 7-8, 2026 in Pierre. Only three members of the Commission are allowed to attend in order to comply with the State's Open Meeting Laws.

Based on changes in with Commissioner's schedules, it was learned that Chairman Huggins is the only member available and will be the sole Commissioner to attend the Conference.

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Jack Dokken, Program Manager for the Office of Air, Rail, and Transit, presented to the Commission for their information the 2026 winners of the Aviation Art Contest. He also noted that there is not a request for funding of prizes this year since there was left over money from last year that will be used to cover the cost.

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Tom Koch, Office of Air, Rail, & Transit, presented to the Commission a request to authorize the purchase of 210 marker cones using Aeronautic funds. The purchase would help to improve safety at public-use airports across the state. Five airports need plastic marker cones to replace existing metal

A-frame markers or to establish new segmented circles around the airports' windsocks. The cones cost \$47.85 each, and shipping is \$938.17, for a total of \$10,484.24. Because the vendor can only guarantee the shipping quote for seven days due to fluctuating fuel prices, the Department further recommends increasing the authorized amount by 10 percent to accommodate potential shipping increases, for a total authorization of \$11,532.66.

A MOTION WAS MADE by Venner and seconded by Howard to authorize the purchase of 210 marker cones at a cost of \$11,532.66 using Aeronautic funds. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

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Jon Becker presented to the Commission the following AIP/IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) grant project:

**Sioux Falls 3-46-0050-069-2026**

IIJA/ATP Passenger Terminal expansion – phase 1 construction

Federal Share	\$ 2,000,000
State Share	\$ 2,561,801 (State ATP grant)
Applicant Share	\$ 1,852,917
Other	\$16,852,980
<hr/> Total	<hr/> \$23,267,698

A MOTION WAS MADE by Coleman and seconded by Howard to approve the AIP/IIJA grant application as presented. All present voted aye by roll call vote. The motion carried.

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An additional public input period was provided by Chairman Huggins and State Senator Joy Hohn addressed the Commission telephonically. Senator Hohn provided input on her thoughts regarding scheduling the Airport Conference in conjunction with a scheduled meeting of the Commission. Senator Hohn offered future assistance via the Legislative process regarding any aeronautics or aviation issues which may arise in the State.

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With no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Huggins declared the meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m. CT.