



Airport Association of North Dakota

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**RE: Testimony to Senate Appropriations Committee – Education and Environment
Division on SB 2006 – Aeronautics Commission Budget**

Chairman Sorvaag and members of the committee,

I am Ryan Riesinger, President of the Airport Association of North Dakota (AAND) and Executive Director of the Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority (GFK). I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today. AAND is the professional organization for North Dakota Airports and it serves to promote airports and aviation across the state. GFK consistently ranks as one of the busiest airports in the country and is the proud home of the University of North Dakota (UND) John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences. I am here today on behalf of AAND and GFK to express our support of SB 2006.

The North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) is vitally important to our State's Airports. Their mission is to serve the public by providing economic and technical assistance for the aviation community while ensuring the safe and cost-effective advancement of aviation in North Dakota. The Commission and its staff successfully accomplish this mission every day, and our statewide system of airports is stronger because of it. We continue to be very supportive of their efforts.

As our airports plan for future development and growth the funding needs are projected to be significant. Nearly \$1.2 billion in projects have been identified over the next 10 years at airports in North Dakota, and the amount for 2025-2029 alone is \$664 million (please see attachment).

Our airports work cooperatively with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to maximize federal grant participation, as they are the primary funding source for airport development nationwide. This is largely accomplished by federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants. However, as project costs have quadrupled over the last 23 years, there simply is not enough federal AIP funding, and additional State and Local funding is needed for the shortfall.

A “generational” project is one that occurs every 20+ years at an airport. The three generational projects with no viable funding plan under current federal and state programs are:

1. Dickinson-Theodore Roosevelt Regional Airport (DIK) – Construct a new air carrier passenger terminal and associated taxiways, aprons, access roads, and parking lots. The total proposed cost is \$48 million.
2. Hector International Airport (FAR) – Reconfigure, renovate, and expand the air carrier passenger terminal and associated pavements. The total proposed cost is \$154 million.
3. Grand Forks International Airport (GFK) – Reconstruct primary runway 17R/35L. The total proposed cost is \$75 million.

Each of these projects will provide critical infrastructure improvements. The total request of State funding to support the projects is \$120 million, with \$30 million to Dickinson, \$60 million to Fargo, and \$30 to Grand Forks. As part of this plan, it will require an increase of local share to complete each project, which will deplete reserves to a minimum safe level.

We support Governor Burgum's recommended Aeronautics Commission budget, including the \$120 million being requested for the three generational airport projects in Dickinson, Fargo, and Grand Forks, as these funds are vital to their successful and timely completion.

In closing, AAND and GFK are supportive of SB 2006. We respectfully request that the committee provide a do pass on the bill. I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and will take any questions the committee may have for me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan R.", written in a cursive style.

Ryan Riesinger
President, Airport Association of North Dakota
Executive Director, Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority

Attachment: Statewide Airport Capital Improvement Planning Report