[Copy, customize and paste on your letterhead and email your support. We really appreciate your support!]

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February 5, 2023

Honorable Chair Joshua Klumb

Senate Transportation Subcommittee

500 East Capitol Ave

Pierre, SD 57501

RE: SB158 Support

Honorable Chairman Klumb and members of the Senate Transportation Subcommittee,

We are writing in support of SB158, a bill to make an appropriation to provide much needed funding for major infrastructure projects to support South Dakota airports.

Currently, the airports in the state have some considerable needs for pavement maintenance, building improvements, safety equipment, and other major infrastructure needs. The spend for pavement projects alone is predicted over the next decade is $44.4 million annually. That is an average of more than $15 million spent annually today. Airport Infrastructure is not keeping pace to even maintain what we have, let alone grow it into the future.

Airports in South Dakota are critical for one of the state’s largest economic engines, tourism. The South Dakota Department of Tourism recently announced that visitor spending was up 8% over 2021 and the number of visitors to the state was up 0.6% from 2021. Predictions show this trend to continue into the future.

The 2020 South Dakota Economic Impact study indicated that airports create over 8,800 jobs and generates over $900 million to the state’s economy. That being said, the State of South Dakota has an average contribution of approximately $1 million to all the airport projects in the state.

[Please add a paragraph as to why this is important to you and/or your business.]

Appropriating $20 million specifically for South Dakota airports will foster positive economic development and growth ability for all regions of the State. Projects at airports also bring federal funding and investment to the state, allowing the state's investment to go further and allowing investment in South Dakota at a national level.

It’s time to start helping to fund our airports! We request that you support SB158.

Sincerely