



Airport Association of North Dakota

Ryan Riesinger – President Anthony Dudas – Vice President

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November 8, 2021

RE: Letter of Support to Senate Appropriations Committee – Utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funding to provide \$5 million to the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission for airport grants (Bill 2345, Section 1: subsection 41)

Members of the Senate Appropriations 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). AAND is the professional organization for North Dakota Airports and it serves to promote airports and aviation across the state. I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funding to provide \$5 million to the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) for airport grants.

Covid-19 has had a serious impact on our nation's economy and one of the hardest hit areas was the travel industry, including airlines and airports. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) has provided funding to help entities replace revenue lost during the pandemic. Allocating \$5 million of ARPA funds to the Airport Infrastructure Fund will allow the NDAC flexibility to keep high priority Airport projects on track and I ask that you utilize the funding for this high priority purpose.

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 and believe the \$5 million to the Airport Infrastructure Fund with American Rescue Plan funding will be the best way to meet our mutual funding needs.

As our airports recover and plan for future development and growth the funding needs continue to be significant. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has developed a 5-year overall capital improvement program for the airports in North Dakota and the amount for 2021-2025 is \$395 million. Our airports work cooperatively with the FAA to maximize federal grant participation, but additional investment from the State and local airport sponsors will be required to meet these forecasts. We certainly support any and all additional funding for the NDAC as we have confidence that it will be administered in the best interest of airports in the State.

In closing, AAND strongly supports Senate Bill 2345, including the \$5 million for the Aeronautics Commission. We respectfully request that the Appropriations Committee support the bill. I thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of support today and appreciate your efforts. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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