



Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission

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NEWS RELEASE

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Aerospace Bills Pass Oklahoma House, Head to Senate

OKLAHOMA CITY – Members of the state House of Representatives today approved two bills designed to further expand Oklahoma’s aerospace industry.

By an 89-9 vote, state lawmakers passed House Bill 2784 by Rep. Mike Jackson, also known as the Airport Modernization Bill. The bill provides \$10 million for capital improvements at many of the state’s 49 regional business airports.

Specifically, the \$10 million would help finance the construction or renovation of airport terminals and hangars, including pavement needs associated with such projects, as well help airports acquire the necessary navigational aids that pilots need to land their aircraft safely, even in inclement weather.

HB 2784 will next be heard in the Senate.

“Our regional business airports are the backbone of our state transportation system and, as such, must compete with other airports around the country to accommodate the needs of business and industry,” Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission Director Victor Bird said. “Much of the commerce that takes place around our state goes through our regional business airports because the businesses that fly in and out of these airports are the same ones that create jobs in our state and help stimulate our economy.”

In addition to passing HB 2784, lawmakers also passed HB 3098 by Rep. Gary Banz with a vote of 90-10. It, too, will head to the Senate for consideration.

Also called the Oklahoma Aerospace Development Act, HB 3098 creates the Oklahoma Aerospace Institute (OAI) and the Center for Aerospace Supplier Quality (CASQ) within the Aeronautics Commission.

The purpose of the OAI and CASQ is to create a partnership of service providers to more effectively respond to the needs of the aerospace industry in the areas of education and training, research, and economic development. The bill provides \$2.5 million to the Aeronautics Commission to fund the OAI and CASQ.

“Even though our state’s aerospace industry is a pillar of our state’s economy, it has been unable to successfully compete for a larger share of the \$5 billion worth of government contracts that Tinker Air Force Base and the Department of Defense award each year. CASQ helps Oklahoma companies understand and navigate the process that companies must go through in order to win those contracts,” said

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Bird, who noted that Oklahoma aerospace companies only get about \$500 million or 10 percent of those federal contracts.

Bird said that Oklahoma's aerospace and aviation industry is one of the state's top employers, resulting in more than 150,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs around the state and an annual payroll of \$5 billion. One in 10 Oklahomans derive their income from the aerospace and aviation industry. But the most important statistic of all, according to Bird, is that the average salary of an employee in the industry is \$54,719 compared to \$29,000 for the average Oklahoman.

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The mission of the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission is to promote aviation, which includes fostering the growth of the aerospace industry and ensuring that the needs of commerce and communities across the state are met by the state's 114 public airports that comprise the Oklahoma Airport System.