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Heitkamp: \$27 Million in Federal Investments for Williston Airport will Help Western ND

Earlier Today, Heitkamp Spoke with FAA Administrator Michael Huerta on the Importance of Federal Investments to Foster Williston's Growth

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp today announced \$27 million in federal funding to support for the relocation of the Williston Airport. Earlier today, Heitkamp spoke with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Michael Huerta about the need for his agency to support western North Dakota's long-term efforts to keep up with its rapid expansion of residents and visitors. The FAA just this week completed an environmental assessment with a finding of no significant impact, which clears the way for land acquisition.

Since 2007, the annual number of enplanements at Williston Airport alone ballooned from 7,800 to 120,900 in 2014. Despite this growth, the airport is accommodating 50-passenger regional jets but no larger – severely limiting the community's ability to grow and causing stress and degradation on a runway originally designed for 30-passenger turbo props.

Just last month, Heitkamp [urged Huerta to formally approve](#) the construction of the new airport in Williston. Today's grant signals the agency's commitment to make long-term investments in the airport's relocation. In April 2014, [Heitkamp brought Huerta to Williston](#) to see firsthand the aviation challenges facing the western part of the state.

"Keeping our state prepared to accommodate our new community members and visitors, particularly out west, means making sure our airports are safe, up-to-date, and ready to grow," said Heitkamp. "Earlier today I spoke with FAA Administrator Huerta – who I know understands our unique aviation challenges because I brought him to Williston last year to see what an airport looks like after enplanement rates balloon by more than 15 times in seven years. We talked about the need to support the Williston community and relocate the airport, and now his agency is announcing significant funding. Together, we can keep supporting long-term planning in North Dakota's oil patch and across the state."

Heitkamp has long supported efforts to support North Dakota's growing population and economy to make sure North Dakota's transportation infrastructure can keep up with the state's fast-growing population and economy. In July, she announced [more than \\$1.3 million](#) in federal funding for equipment upgrades and apron and taxiway improvements at Williston's Sloulin Field International Airport.

In May, as part of her [Strong & Safe Communities Initiative](#), Heitkamp [brought together community leaders from Bismarck, Minot, and surrounding towns](#) to discuss the state's transportation infrastructure needs. The discussion focused on the importance of building and expanding roads and bridges across North Dakota to both improve safety and keep up with the increase of traffic on the roads.

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