

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4151

**FISCAL
NOTE**

By Delegate Clark

[Introduced January 14, 2026; referred to the
Committee on Government Organization then
Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section,
2 designated §5B-2-22, relating to establishing the West Virginia Aviation Access and
3 Tourism Growth Act; expanding air service throughout West Virginia by enhancing regional
4 airport infrastructure; increasing tourism accessibility; supporting workforce development
5 in aviation; and incentivizing strategic public-private partnerships that connect air travel
6 with economic development.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. DIVISION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

§5B-2-22. West Virginia Aviation Access and Tourism Growth Act.

(a) Legislative Findings.

The West Virginia Legislature finds that:

(1) West Virginia's tourism economy is dependent on accessible, affordable, and efficient
transportation infrastructure.

(2) Current air service in the state is inadequate to meet the needs of visitors, residents,
and business travelers.

(3) Improving air connectivity will stimulate job creation, increase tax revenue, and
enhance West Virginia's national competitiveness as a tourism destination.

(4) State investment and coordinated planning are necessary to support underserved
airports and rural communities.

(5) Public-private partnerships, innovative service models, and workforce training are
essential to modernizing the aviation and tourism sectors.

(b) Creation of the West Virginia Air Service Development and Airport Modernization Fund.

(1) There is hereby established the "West Virginia Air Service Development and Airport
Modernization Fund" (ASD Fund) under the Division of Economic Development.

(2) The fund may be used to:

(A) Provide matching grants to regional airports seeking federal FAA or DOT funds;

(B) Offer revenue guarantees and incentive packages for new commercial air service routes;

(C) Finance terminal upgrades, technology enhancements, and traveler amenities;

(D) Support capital investments in general aviation airports for tourism-related uses.

(3) Initial appropriation: \$15 million in state fiscal year 2026 with additional funding subject to annual legislative review.

(c) Air and Tourism Marketing Partnership Program.

(1) The Department of Tourism, in coordination with the Division of Economic Development and local Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs), shall establish a co-branded air service marketing program to:

(A) Promote new and existing flight routes in coordination with airlines and airports;

(B) Tie tourism campaign assets directly to accessible air travel options;

(C) Provide grants for destination-specific advertising in key feeder markets.

(2) Matching grants shall not exceed \$250,000 per project annually.

(d) Strategic Investment in Key Aviation Assets.

(1) Priority investment shall be given to:

(A) Airports located within 20 miles of major tourism assets or national parks;

(B) Airports with demonstrated capacity to grow enplanements or support new service;

(C) Airports located in federally designated Opportunity Zones or economically distressed counties.

(2) Specific priority facilities include but are not limited to:

(A) Yeager Airport (CRW);

(B) North Central WV Airport (CKB);

(C) Greenbrier Valley Airport (LWB); and

(D) Eastern WV Regional Airport (MRB).

(e) Workforce Development in Aviation and Aerospace.

(1) The Community and Technical College System of West Virginia shall create and expand aviation workforce programs, including:

(A) Aircraft maintenance technician training;

(B) Aviation management and logistics certification; and

(C) Pilot and flight operations programs.

(2) The Department of Education shall include aviation career exploration in high school CTE curricula.

(f) Aviation Business Incentive Package.

(1) The Department of Revenue shall offer the following tax incentives:

(A) Sales tax exemption on jet fuel for commercial flights originating in-state;

(B) Property tax exemption on new hangars, terminals, and aviation business developments; and

(C) Up to 10% income tax credit for aviation-related employers creating 10 or more full-time jobs.

(g) West Virginia Aviation and Access Task Force.

(1) The Governor shall appoint a 13-member task force composed of:

(A) Two members from the Senate (one majority and one minority);

(B) Two members from the House of Delegates (one majority and one minority);

(C) One representative from the Department of Tourism;

(D) One from the Division of Economic Development;

(E) Three airport authority representatives;

(F) Two representatives from the private tourism sector;

(G) One higher education aviation expert; and

(H) One airline or aviation industry representative.

(2) Duties shall include:

(A) Developing a 10-year statewide aviation and tourism access plan;

- 70 (B) Recommending routes, funding priorities, and public-private partnerships; and
- 71 (C) Reporting annually to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.
- 72 (h) *Effective Date*: This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the West Virginia Aviation Access and Tourism Growth Act.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.