



News Release:

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Unanimous Senate Vote Moves SB 130 Forward to Repair Roads Serving Ellsworth AFB

For Immediate Release

Box Elder, South Dakota - City of Box Elder, On Thursday, February 26, 2026, the South Dakota Senate voted unanimously 32-0 to approve SB 130, sending the bill forward to the South Dakota House of Representatives for further consideration. The bill would appropriate \$8 million from the state general fund for roadway and related infrastructure improvements necessary to support, mitigate, and address impacts from construction activity occurring at Ellsworth Air Force Base. The City of Box Elder is proud to be home to Ellsworth Air Force Base. For generations, the base and the community have worked side by side to make western South Dakota a strong place to live, work, and raise families. That relationship has created tremendous opportunity, but it also comes with responsibility. One of those responsibilities is making sure the roads serving Ellsworth Air Force Base are safe, reliable, and able to handle the demands placed on them.

Ellsworth will soon be home to the B-21 Raider stealth bomber and is already home to the 28th Bomb Wing and its B-1B Lancer bombers and MQ-9 Reaper drone operations. The base plays a critical role in our nation's defense, especially in strategic deterrence and long-range strike capability.

Additionally, the base has an annual economic impact of nearly 900 million dollars and supports about 9,100 service members, civilians, and family members. That activity translates into more than 10,000 direct and indirect jobs. Ongoing B-21 construction projects represent more than 2 billion dollars in investment, in addition to the recently completed 130-million-dollar runway project. Those investments are expected to generate more than 80 million dollars in state sales and excise tax revenue. Ellsworth Air Force Base is the largest employer in western South Dakota and the state's second-largest, making it a major economic driver.

"Ellsworth Air Force Base is one of South Dakota's most important assets," said Rob Timm, Government Affairs Director for the City of Box Elder. "SB 130 is a straightforward and responsible step. It helps repair roads damaged by installation-related construction and brings them back to their original condition. Just as important, it shows that South Dakota is willing to stand behind the significant federal investment happening right now."

"Supporting Ellsworth Air Force Base today helps position it for future missions tomorrow. That means more jobs, more economic opportunities, and a stronger country." Timm said. Passage of SB 130 underscores South Dakota's commitment to supporting major federal investments and positioning Ellsworth for continued mission success through dependable infrastructure.

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