

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Bryan Bedford
FAA Administrator
800 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Bedford:

We write to express our strong support for the inclusion of Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (BZN) in the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) pilot program to convert high activity air traffic control towers (ATCs) operating under the Federal Contract Tower (FCT) program to FAA staffed visual flight rules towers.

As you know, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 directs the FAA to establish the pilot program no later than 18 months after enactment and to prioritize contract towers that meet specific tower operations and passenger enplanement criteria. The Fiscal Year 2026 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, which was recently signed into law, provides \$6 million for the pilot program as well. The FAA is now well positioned to move forward expeditiously in carrying out the program and we believe BZN should be one of the first airports selected for consideration.

In addition to meeting the metrics laid out in the 2024 FAA Reauthorization bill, BZN is one of the busiest FCTs in the country. In 2025, BZN welcomed a record breaking 2,809,419 passengers, a 6.3% increase from the previous record set in 2024. As BZN's air traffic continues to grow, insufficient and inconsistent staffing levels at their contract tower threatens aviation safety. With that in mind, please provide responses to the questions below:

- What is the overall status of the pilot program?
- Which office(s) of the FAA are responsible for leading the implementation and execution of the pilot program?
- What factors will the FAA consider in selecting towers for the pilot program, and will eligible airports have the opportunity to provide input?
- When will the FAA provide Congress with a briefing on the timeline and plan for the pilot program?
- When can eligible airports expect to hear from the FAA on next steps?

This program represents a valuable opportunity to leverage federal investment to strengthen passenger safety, support continued growth in air travel, and ensure BZN's facilities are equipped to meet both current operational demands and future capacity needs. We await your timely response and appreciate your consideration to include BZN in the pilot program.

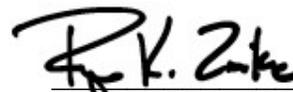
Sincerely,



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Tim Sheehy
United States Senator



Ryan Zinke
Member of Congress