
NEWS RELEASE

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April 2, 2024

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Airport improvements support services, growth for communities

VICTORIA – New support for B.C.’s regional airports will improve the lives of people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities by enhancing front-line services, such as firefighting and health care, while fostering economic growth.

“Airports play a key role in bringing together communities and people, and provide the vital links that keep goods moving and our economy strong,” said Dan Coulter, Minister of State for Infrastructure and Transit. “This provincial support will help our regional airports with a wide range of upgrades that will increase safety, reliability and capacity for the services that British Columbians rely on, including access to health care and support for firefighting.”

This year, the Province is investing \$11 million through the BC Air Access Program to support 26 upgrades at two dozen airports throughout British Columbia, prioritizing the needs of local communities.

Projects include:

- runway improvements at Kamloops, Castlegar and Terrace;
- an emergency heliport upgrade for the Metlakatla First Nation;
- fuel storage improvements at four locations to support wildfire aircraft operations;
- improved accessibility at the Vancouver Harbour Flight Centre for passengers with disabilities;
- perimeter fencing and emergency-access improvements at Pitt Meadows; and
- various terminal upgrades and emergency preparedness improvements.

“The BC Air Access Program provides front-line funding that supports wildfire suppression, air-ambulance, emergency-response, tourism and economic-development initiatives for British Columbia’s airports,” said Heather McCarley, chair of the BC Aviation Council. “These strategic investments are particularly important for the province’s remote, rural and Indigenous communities.”

B.C. is home to more than 300 public airports, heliports and water aerodromes that connect people and their communities, support the economy and help keep people safe.

While airports fall under federal jurisdiction, the Province recognizes the importance of smaller airports to their communities. Aviation-sector support through the BC Air Access Program (BCAAP) is critical to help the B.C. government fulfil its responsibilities related to medevac, wildfire suppression, emergency response, access to remote and Indigenous communities, tourism and economic development.

Since 2017, BCAAP has committed more than \$63 million in grants to infrastructure projects at

71 air facilities. The program is open to facilities that serve fewer than one million passengers per year. BCAAP has an open intake for all eligible applicants annually from November to December, and for Indigenous applicants and for small urgent safety-related projects throughout the year.

Learn More:

To find out more about the BC Air Access Program, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/transportation/funding-engagement-permits/funding-grants/aviation-infrastructure-funding>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:

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BACKGROUND

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BC Air Access Program projects

Air facilities in the following communities have received funding through the BC Air Access Program for 2024-25.

- 100 Mile House – \$35,000 to develop an airport master plan
- Campbell River – \$996,100 to install new fuel storage systems
- Castlegar – \$1.6 million to rehabilitate the aviation apron
- Clearwater – \$19,000 for a medevac helipad feasibility study and construction plan
- Comox – \$220,000 to replace a diesel ground power unit with an electrical unit
- Creston – \$35,000 to create an airport master plan
- Dawson Creek – \$403,750 to upgrade a fuelling terminal and replace fuel pumps
- Dease Lake – \$918,652 to fence the airport perimeter
- Fraser Lake – \$29,012 to rebuild the runway's north side
- Invermere – \$17,100 for runway and apron improvements
- Kamloops – \$1.8 million for taxi-lane rehabilitation
- McBride – \$495,000 to upgrade fuel system for medevac, wildfire and other emergency services
- Metlakatla – \$567,000 for an emergency heliport upgrade
- Pemberton – \$121,500 for runway repairs and painting
- Pitt Meadows – \$520,000 for perimeter fencing and culvert replacement to improve emergency access
- Prince George – \$612,542 to purchase a fuel truck
- Prince Rupert – \$60,000 to upgrade security and communications systems
- Quesnel – \$272,000 to upgrade the terminal building
- Sechelt – \$24,500 to improve operations at night and in poor weather
- Terrace - \$2 million for runway rehabilitation and new lights and signage
- Tofino – \$271,700 for a back-up generator for emergency preparedness
- Trail – \$19,747 to cut tops off trees around the airport for safety
- Valemount – \$132,297 to replace a fuel tank to provide a larger storage capacity for wildfire suppression
- Vancouver Harbour Flight Centre – \$12,675 to purchase and train staff to use an adaptive aircraft passenger lift, which will allow passengers with mobility challenges to safely board seaplanes

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