



City of Yakima

# **News Release**

**Subject: Regional Airport Search**

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## **New Legislation Extends Regional Airport Search**

On Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, Governor Jay Inslee signed Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1791 (ESHB 1791). The bill creates a new State Commercial Aviation Work Group and directs it to study the need for additional airport capacity in Washington.

Gov. Inslee signed ESHB 1791 with [selected sections vetoed](#). The bill directs the work group to consider only existing airports for potential expansion to meet state and Puget Sound commercial air transportation needs.

On January 5<sup>th</sup> the City of Yakima sent a [letter](#) to the [Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission \(CACC\)](#) requesting Yakima Air Terminal (YKM) be considered to help meet the capacity needs. In seeking consideration of YKM for enhanced cargo and commercial air service, Council's letter lists benefits for Yakima as the site for a new regional airport location. Among them are:

- Ample land within a 5-mile radius of the airport for developing long-term parking, rental cars, hotels and other industrial/commercial uses
- Completion of an environmental review for a planned new terminal at YKM
- Yakima's easy to access to Interstate 82, Interstate 90 and commercial rail
- YKM was previously identified by WSDOT as a beta test site for electric aviation

The CACC considered 17 airports in Puget Sound and Moses Lake; only Paine Field was identified to have the potential to support up to 4.3 million annual passengers.

"The Yakima airport has been refining a strategy to meet the air transportation needs," said Yakima Airport Director Rob Hodgman. "Yakima continues to be the only community to volunteer to provide additional aviation capacity."

The City of Yakima commissioned a poll in January to gauge community interest in airport expansion. That poll received 1,404 responses, with 83 percent strongly supporting expansion of YKM.

The Governor's veto message retained the CACC and directed it to finish its work.

The new work group is scheduled to make its first annual report by July 2024. "YKM is seeking an opportunity to convey the strategy that will help solve the looming 2032 airport capacity shortfall," said Hodgman.

Click [FLY YKM | Yakima's Best Way to Travel](#) for more about YKM.