

March 6, 2026

Eight weeks of the 2026 Legislative session are complete, with four days remaining. Monday is the last day for a bill or resolution to pass both bodies. Thursday was the last day for a “smoke out” (have the floor deliver a bill that lost in committee). Tuesday and Wednesday of this coming week will be used for conference committees – to compromise on differences by which a bill passed each side – and finish up the spending bills and the budget. The final budget bill for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2026, will be debated and adopted next week.

Here are some bills of interest for your discussions over the weekend. Please contact your legislator on [HB 1253](#) with the ACTION ALERT details sent on Thursday this week.

Property Tax Plan Contains Both Good and Bad

This week SDFB engaged heavily in the conversation on property tax. On Wednesday, SDFB testified in support of the Governor’s bill, [SB 96](#). We also testified against HB 1253. However, a deal was made between House legislative leadership and the Governor that tied together five bills, which complicated the landscape.

South Dakota Farm Bureau supported SB 96 but did not support the broader “property tax package” presented this week. Although the bills are debated individually, SDFB does not have policy positions on every proposal, and has serious opposition to HB 1253. Therefore, we could not responsibly endorse the passage of all five bills as a package. Below is a synopsis of the bills:

- [SB 245](#) dedicates the 2027 sales tax increase from 4.2% to 4.5% to owner-occupied property tax relief. The bill also uses roughly \$55 million in one-time money to buy down the education levies for this upcoming year.
- [SB 96](#) creates the option for counties to implement a sales tax dedicated solely to buy down homeowner property taxes.
- [HB 1253](#) caps annual property assessment growth at 5% for five-year increments, resetting assessments back to market value every five years. ***ACTION ALERT BILL**
- [HB 1323](#) gives citizens 10 more days to gather signatures to refer a school board’s decision to opt out of the state’s property tax cap.
- [HB 1051](#) reduces the maximum tax levies for school districts.

SB 96 passed the House of Representatives and will now head to the Governor’s desk.

Eminent Domain Resolution Dies in the Senate

House Joint Resolution 5001 failed on the Senate floor in a 14-19 vote. HJR 5001 would have put a constitutional amendment on the ballot dealing with eminent domain. The resolution included the language “For purposes of this section, public use does not include an increase in the tax base, tax revenues, employment, or general economic health.” According to current constitutional language, eminent domain cannot be used unless it has a public use.

Soil Amendment Sales Tax Exemption Bill Passes the Senate

This week HB [1254](#) passed the Senate floor on a 28-6 vote. The bill codifies existing practice by explicitly exempting soil amendments from sales tax when used for agricultural purposes, aligning statute with how these products are already treated in the marketplace. It is important to note that retailers are **not** currently collecting sales tax on soil amendments based on long-standing treatment like fertilizer, which has always been sales-tax exempt. Only recently was it discovered that soil amendments are not explicitly exempt in statute, creating uncertainty for farmers, ranchers, and retailers.

Brand Board Appointments Confirmed in Senate Committee

Two appointments to the South Dakota Brand Board were presented in Senate Committee this week. The two Governor-appointed individuals are Kory Bierle and Ross Cuny. Kory Bierle is a fifth-generation rancher who operates Madsen Ranch Land & Cattle, a commercial cow/calf operation near Midland, South Dakota. Ross Cuny is a fifth-generation rancher from Buffalo Gap, South Dakota. The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee moved that the Senate advise and consent on both individuals.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Brand Board.

SDFB Bill Tracker

The SDFB bill tracker is available [online](#). As in past years, it gives you a quick look at the bills we are supporting, opposing, or just watching.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the South Dakota Farm Bureau policy team.

Matthew Bogue
SDFB State Public Policy Director
(605) 377-8833
matthew@sdfbf.org

Krystil Smit
SDFB Chief Executive Officer
(605) 261-2960
k.smit@sdfbf.org

Helpful Links:

[The SDFB Bill Tracker](#)

[The SD Legislature full list of bills](#)

[2026 SD Legislators Contact Information](#)

[2026 Cracker Barrel Schedule](#)