

February 27, 2026

Week seven marked a key point in legislative session: Crossover Day, which is when all bills must be out of their chamber of origin. In other words, all the House bills must be out of the House and all the Senate bills must be out of the Senate. The House had 23 bills and the Senate had 27 bills to act upon on the final day in the body of origin.

Property Tax Measures Narrow Down

The 2026 Legislative Session has been a whirlwind when it comes to property taxes. This year, SDFB tracked 64 property tax-related bills, and successfully defeated 14 that would have been detrimental to South Dakota’s agricultural community. For reference, in 2025 SDFB followed 29 property tax-related bills; in 2024, that number was 11. To say SDFB has been active in both the Senate and House Tax Committees this session is putting mildly. SDFB will continue working to protect farmers and ranchers while promoting sound property tax policy. Below are a few bills of note.

SDFB, the South Dakota Retailers Association, and the SD Department of Revenue were successful in defeating [SJR 505](#). The resolution would have limited annual valuation increases to 2%, set the maximum amount of ad valorem taxes on an owner-occupied property at 1% of its value, and required reassessment at fair market value upon a change in ownership. It is important to note that South Dakota’s tax system is built on the principle of fair and uniform assessments within property classes. SJR 505 would have broken this principle by allowing two nearly identical homes in the same neighborhood to be taxed differently. Additionally, rather than reducing property taxes for all, SJR 505 would have simply redistributed the tax burden. Specifically, in the event of an opt-out, farmers, ranchers, business owners, and new homebuyers would have picked up the bill.

In the House of Representatives, SDFB was successful in defeating [HB 1308](#). HB 1308 was an attempt to increase the state sales tax rate from 4.2% to 5.0%. In 2023 when there were large state budget surpluses, SDFB joined other statewide organizations that supported the idea of using state sales tax dollars for property tax relief; however, our organization does not support going above 4.5%, especially when 100% of the proceeds would go only to owner-occupied properties. Additionally, the bill was amended on the floor to eliminate the sales tax on food, which only strengthened SDFB’s opposition due to longstanding policy. HB 1308 died on the House floor by a vote of 24–42.

A bill that has passed its third leg of the five-leg journey is [HB 1264](#), which seeks to eliminate the Agricultural Land Assessment Implementation and Oversight Advisory Task Force. This task force was created when the agricultural land productivity formula was implemented and served as a mechanism for adjustments through its 10-year rollout. The productivity formula was fully implemented in 2019, and legislators felt the task force was no longer necessary. HB 1264 passed Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources unanimously and was placed on the consent calendar.

One of the few bills left is the Governor’s property tax bill, [SB 96](#), which creates the option for counties to implement a sales tax dedicated solely to property tax relief for owner-occupied properties. Under SB

96, counties may adopt a sales tax of up to 0.5%, and revenue generated must be used exclusively to provide property tax relief for owner-occupied properties within the county. If sufficient revenue is generated to reduce the county's consolidated levy and surplus funds remain, those additional dollars would then be used to provide relief to other property classes, including agricultural property. SB 96 passed the Senate and will now be debated in the House. The Governor has also released a map displaying estimated property tax savings by county. Click [here](#) to see the Governor's map.

Agriculture Groups Defeat Animal Cruelty Bill

SDFB, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and other agricultural groups collaborated this week to oppose [SB 156](#), which would have created new terms and increase the penalty for animal cruelty. While SDFB strongly opposes any type of animal cruelty, we did have concerns about the specifics of SB 156. First, South Dakota already strengthened its animal cruelty laws in 2014 after a broad coalition including the State Veterinarian, agricultural groups, and animal rights groups worked together to clearly define animal cruelty and classify it as a felony. Senator Taffy Howard's proposal increased penalties to a level comparable to child abuse while relying on subjective terms that created legal uncertainty. When penalties are that severe, the language must be precise. Our concern is that undefined standards also open the door to frivolous complaints and lawsuits from activist groups seeking to target farmers and ranchers, exposing producers to costly litigation and reputational harm.

SB 156 died in House Agriculture and Natural Resources on a 10-2 vote.

Please thank the Representatives below for voting no on SB 156.

[Gosch, Spencer \(R\)](#)

[Nolz, Kaley \(R\)](#)

[Hunt, Jana \(R\)](#)

[Overweg, Marty \(R\)](#)

[Ismay, Travis \(R\)](#)

[Shubeck, John \(R\)](#)

[Ladner, Trish \(R\)](#)

[Van Diepen, Kevin \(R\)](#)

[May, Liz \(R\)](#)

[Wittman, Kady \(D\)](#)

Joint Resolution on Eminent Domain Passes Senate Committee

House [Joint Resolution 5001](#) would put a constitutional amendment on the ballot dealing with eminent domain. The resolution was amended to include 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. The Senate State Affairs committee passed the resolution on a 5-3 vote and it will now go to the Senate. If passed by the Senate, voters will have the opportunity to vote on HJR 5001 in November 2026.

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.

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Helpful Links:

[The SDFB Bill Tracker](#)

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

[2026 SD Legislators Contact Information](#)

[2026 Cracker Barrel Schedule](#)