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# Texas Aerospace Commission

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## Agency at a Glance

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The Legislature created the Texas Space Commission in 1987 to encourage economic development of industries related to the commercialization of space, later renaming it the Texas Aerospace Commission in 1993.

The Commission performs the following functions:

- helps recruit and expand aerospace industries in Texas by promoting working relationships among governmental agencies, academic and other research institutions, and industry;
- administers state grant funds to assist with the establishment of reusable launch facilities, or spaceports; and
- helps promote space-related research.

## Key Facts

- **Funding.** The agency operates with an annual appropriation of about \$213,000, composed entirely of General Revenue Funds. The agency receives some revenue from the sale of its speciality license plates.
- **Staffing.** The agency has three employees, including an Executive Director and two staff that are responsible for planning and agency operations.
- **Spaceport Initiatives.** The Commission received an additional \$1.57 million in General Revenue for the 2002-2003 biennium for grants to local spaceport authorities to support initial planning and development costs for commercial spaceports.

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## Agency Head

Bill Looke, Executive Director  
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## Recommendation

1. Continue the Commission for 12 Years, and Clarify Its Mission as Fostering the Development of Both the Aerospace and Aviation Industries.

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## Issue 1 | Texas Has A Continuing Need for the Aerospace Commission.

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### Key Findings

- The statute does not clearly reflect the Commission's mission regarding both space and aviation.
- The Commission lacks the necessary controls to operate efficiently as a state agency.

The Commission's statutory duties have never been updated to include both space and aviation, even though the agency's budget pattern and performance measures include enhancing the awareness of and attracting both space and aviation industries. The Commission has also not clearly defined how to effectively accomplish these broad duties within its limited resources. In addition, the Commission, with its small staff, has difficulty performing basic functions required of all state agencies including having documented policies, procedures, and controls over key agency processes related to fiscal management, human resources, and overall agency operations. The Sunset Commission determined that, with needed changes, the Texas Aerospace Commission could serve a needed function and should be continued.

### Recommendations

#### Change in Statute

##### **1.1 Continue the Texas Aerospace Commission for 12 years, and clarify its mission as fostering the development of both aerospace and aviation industries.**

This recommendation would continue the Texas Aerospace Commission for the standard 12-year period until 2015. The Commission would be required to perform the following duties.

- Analyze the State of Texas' economic position within the aerospace and aviation industries.
- Develop short and long-term business strategies for the state designed to promote the retention, development, and expansion of aerospace and aviation industry facilities, including specific recommendations to the Legislature and Governor.
- Liaison with other state and federal entities with related economic, educational, and defense responsibilities to support marketing Texas' aerospace and aviation capabilities.
- Provide technical support and expertise to the state and local spaceport authorities regarding aerospace and aviation business matters.

#### Management Action

##### **1.2 The Commission should develop and implement necessary management and oversight controls.**

The Commission should develop and implement the following controls.

- A Strategic Plan that ensures a clear focus and direction for the agency, includes reasonable goals and strategies that are achievable with the agency's resources, and details the methodology of how the Commission plans to implement the strategies.

- Consistent agency-wide policies, procedures, and controls over day-to-day operations including fiscal management and budgeting, contracting, human resources, and travel.
- Criteria to evaluate and prioritize which projects to pursue, and the amount of time and resources to allocate for each project.
- Financial and operational controls over the Commission's non-profit foundation.

**1.3 The Commission should submit regular reports to the Sunset Commission detailing the agency's progress on implementation of these recommendations.**

The Commission would submit quarterly reports, beginning in January 2003, on the status of all of the Sunset Commission recommendations, and a report to the Sunset Commission detailing any progress that has been made to address these recommendations in December 2004, prior to the 79th legislative session.

### **Fiscal Implication Summary**

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These recommendations would not have a fiscal impact to the State. The Commission should carry out these duties with its current funding and staffing levels.

