



**SMALL UAV  
COALITION**  
*A Partnership for  
Safety & Innovation*

**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Coalition Comments on Senate FAA Reauthorization Bill Welcomes Next Steps in Moving Towards a UAS Regulatory Framework**

**WASHINGTON, DC – MARCH 9, 2016** – Today, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) and Ranking Member Bill Nelson (D-FL) introduced the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2016, which includes an unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) subtitle.

The Small UAV Coalition welcomes the next step in reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and progress in moving forward with a UAS regulatory framework as a means to expedite the safe and timely integration of small UAS into the National Airspace System for commercial, recreational, and philanthropic purposes.

Authorizing the Secretary to grant exemptions for UAS operations beyond the visual line of sight (BVLOS), as well as permit operations at night, is a major step forward for the UAS industry across every sector of the economy. The Coalition applauds a provision that asserts that integrating routine BVLOS operations into the National Airspace System should be a top priority for the FAA. Without a framework for BVLOS operations in place, the United States risks falling behind global competitors who are increasingly embracing the benefits of commercial UAS operations.

The Coalition supports a provision related to UAS traffic management and will assist the FAA and NASA's existing work on an unmanned traffic management system (UTM) pilot program, an important step towards implementation of a UTM in low-altitude, uncontrolled airspace. However, the Coalition supports an accelerated timeframe for the pilot program, building on years of research, development, and testing that NASA, in partnership with private industry, has been conducting in support of UTM implementation.

The Coalition commends the provision that preempts State and local laws that infringe upon the FAA's exclusive jurisdiction over the national airspace. This provision is consistent with an FAA [fact sheet](#) released last year that asserted that that a "patchwork quilt" of state and local UAS regulations could lead to a "fractionalized airspace."

While the bill includes many positive steps towards widespread integration of UAS into the airspace, the Coalition is concerned that several privacy provisions could undermine the ongoing multistakeholder process led by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) with broad industry participation and stall the development of the commercial UAS industry.

The Coalition urges the Committee's final bill to provide for a new class of air carriers for companies using small UAS to carry goods that would create a necessary pathway to delivery and utilization of essential advanced UAS products. Additionally, the Coalition encourages the Committee to establish a micro UAS classification to provide for commercial operation of the smallest category of UAS (those weighing 4.4 pounds and under) on the same terms under which hobbyists have safely flown for years.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee adopted such provisions with bipartisan support when marking up its FAA reauthorization legislation. The Coalition looks forward to working with the Senate to adopt similar risk-based measures that will help the United States begin to fully and safely realize the economic and consumer benefits of highly automated UAS, operating both within and beyond the visual line of sight.

The Small UAV Coalition thanks the Committee for its hard work and diligence in protecting American innovation and UAS issues as it considers the FAA reauthorization legislation. We look forward to continuing to work with all members of the Committee, Congress, the FAA, and the Administration to fully realize the vast economic potential of small UAS.

Small UAV Coalition members include Airmap, Amazon Prime Air, DJI, DroneDeploy, Google [X], GoPro, Intel, Kespry, Parrot, PrecisionHawk, Verizon Ventures, 3D Robotics, AGI, Botlink, Flirtey, StratAero, and ZeroTech. For more information on the Small UAV Coalition, please visit [www.smalluavcoalition.org](http://www.smalluavcoalition.org), contact [press@smalluavcoalition.org](mailto:press@smalluavcoalition.org), or follow @smallUAVs on Twitter.

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