

May 16, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader McConnell, Leader Reid, and Leader Pelosi:

As representatives of the unmanned aerial systems (UAS) industry, we write to ask that you prioritize passage of comprehensive, long-term legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), currently operating under a short-term extension set to expire on July 15, 2016.

As the nation's aviation safety authority, the FAA is tasked with overseeing the safe and widespread integration of UAS into the National Airspace System (NAS). In order to fully realize the vast economic potential and consumer benefits of this rapidly developing technology, the burgeoning UAS industry needs a forward-leaning, long-term regulatory framework within which it can develop in a safe, responsible, and efficient manner.

The proposed House and Senate FAA reauthorization bills both recognize the need for FAA to take a more progressive and expeditious approach to developing a UAS regulatory framework. With broad, bipartisan support, these bills would direct the FAA to create pathways for small UAS to deliver goods and to implement an unmanned traffic management (UTM) system. They also would promote beyond visual line of sight testing and operations, broader UAS access to commercial mobile services and unlicensed spectrum, and a micro UAS classification to provide for commercial operation of the smallest category of UAS. Importantly, the Senate bill that passed 95-3 includes a provision that affirms the FAA's exclusive jurisdiction over the national airspace, aircraft, and pilots, while preserving state and local governments' authorities and the rights of private property owners. As the FAA said in its fact sheet on state and local UAS regulations, a "'patchwork quilt' of different restrictions could severely limit the flexibility of FAA in controlling the airspace and flight patterns, and ensuring safety and an efficient air traffic flow."

All of the aforementioned provisions are critical components of safe and responsible UAS integration. While the FAA has demonstrated a strong willingness to engage in public-private partnerships to develop regulations and performance standards, many of these important initiatives lack timely and concrete paths forward, which these bills would provide.

The UAS industry cannot fully develop and thrive under another short-term extension of current FAA authorities. In order to ensure the widespread integration of UAS into the airspace in a safe and efficient manner, we respectfully ask that you work with the Committees of jurisdiction and other leaders to ensure that Congress acts swiftly to enact comprehensive FAA reauthorization legislation before current authorities expire.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing to work with Congress, the FAA, and all stakeholders to ensure that the United States continues to be the world's UAS leader and does not fall

behind global competitors who are increasingly embracing the benefits of this rapidly developing technology.

Sincerely,



cc: The Honorable John Thune, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
The Honorable Bill Shuster, Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
The Honorable Bill Nelson, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure