



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

June 28, 2016

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman, House Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Senate Commerce,
Science, and Transportation Committee
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member, House Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce,
Science, and Transportation Committee
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We write today to ask that you include measures to ensure the continued and safe integration of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) into the national airspace in any short-term extension of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) authorities. While stakeholders from across the aviation sector maintain that passage of comprehensive, long-term FAA reauthorization legislation is imperative to ensuring both safety and economic growth, it has become increasingly clear that Congress will need to pass another short-term extension before current authorities expire on July 15, 2016.

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. On June 21, 2016, the FAA issued the first operational rules for routine commercial operations of small UAS (those under 55 pounds), commonly known as Part 107. While the Small UAV Coalition welcomes this initial regulatory framework, it does not alleviate the need for Congress to act to ensure that the FAA takes a more progressive and expeditious approach to developing robust UAS regulations.

The UAS subtitles included in the House and Senate FAA reauthorization bills include important bipartisan provisions that go beyond the scope of Part 107 and we therefore urge you to include them in a short-term extension:

Establish an unmanned traffic management (UTM) system. A UTM is critical component of safe and efficient small UAS operations beyond the visual line of sight in low altitude airspace. The House and Senate bills both direct the FAA to establish a UTM pilot program, building upon years of research conducted by NASA, in partnership with industry. Given the advanced state of both this research and the technology, Senator Hatch proposed an amendment (#3656) on the floor to establish a deadline for the pilot program and to provide more direction to the FAA to move from the pilot program to phased implementation around the country. The amendment received bipartisan support and was included in the manager's package that was ultimately not considered.

Create a framework for small UAS to deliver goods. Both bills include bipartisan provisions directing the Department of Transportation to establish a pathway to certify a new class of air carriers who seek to

operate small UAS to carry goods for compensation or hire. The final rule authorizes only *intrastate* carriage of goods, and only within the visual line of sight. The DOT/FAA should begin setting up this streamlined and risk-based certification process now, so that when additional operations are authorized, businesses can begin to benefit from these new regulations while meeting the highest levels of safety without further delay.

Ensure safe and efficient operations in the nation’s airspace. 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 government authority 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 these 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, these important initiatives lack timely and concrete paths forward and the UAS industry cannot safely and fully develop or thrive without them. For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to include these provisions in any short-term extension of FAA authorities.

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,



www.smalluavcoalition.org

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