

BEFORE THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

IN THE MATTER OF

Petition of Near Earth Autonomy, Inc. for Exemption

Docket No. FAA-2018-1057

COMMENTS OF THE SMALL UAV COALITION

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The Small UAV Coalition¹ is pleased to provide its comments in support of the petition by Near Earth Autonomy, Inc. (“Near Earth”) for an exemption to allow it to operate the Malloy Aeronautics TRV-80 and TRV-150² unmanned aircraft systems with takeoff weights of 126 and 254 pounds, respectively, to display its “turnkey aviation safety systems” for conducting inspection, surveying, monitoring and cargo delivery under one or more contracts with the United States military and commercial customers.³

Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) offer a safe and efficient means of conducting a variety of operations. Members of the Small UAV Coalition share an interest in advancing regulatory and policy changes that will in the near term permit the operation of UAS – including large UAS – within and beyond the line of sight, with varying degrees of autonomy, for commercial and other civil purposes. The Coalition believes that granting this and other petitions that seek to operate heavier drones will help advance this objective.

Near Earth has been operating UAS under Part 107 for 1,200 flights comprising more than 450 hours of operations, without incident. Near Earth does not seek any relief from Part 107; the only relief sought is from the 55 lb. limit. Thus, Near Earth will comply with the conditions and restrictions in Part 107. Moreover, the UAS operations will be conducted over secure demonstration sites and only for technology presentation purposes. Near Earth will use a visual observer who will have clear view of the UAS and will be in constant communication with the pilot in command. All flights will occur over private or controlled-access property with the

¹ Members of the Small UAV Coalition are listed at www.smalluavcoalition.org.

² The Federal Register summary of the petition mistakenly describes the aircraft as TRV-50 and TR-80, 84 Fed. Reg. 14713, at 14714 (April 11, 2019). The weights stated in that summary, however, pertain to the TRV-80 and TRV-150, and the petition clearly seeks relief for these two UAS models.

³ While Near Earth requests an exemption under section 333, that section has been replaced by 49 U.S.C. §44807.

property owner's consent. Thus, any perceived increase in risk because of the weight of the drone models is sufficiently mitigated. Moreover, the use of UAS instead of manned helicopters eliminates the risk to the crew as well as reduces the risk as to persons on the ground.

The Small UAV Coalition supports Near Earth's petition, in consideration of the many safety features detailed in its petition and the particular operational environments where it will demonstrate its technology. Accordingly, the Coalition requests the FAA grant Near Earth's petition for exemption.

Respectfully submitted,



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