

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2402

August 5, 2014

The Honorable Michael Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta:

We are writing to express our continued interest in the development of a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Academic Center of Excellence to conduct important research related to the integration of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) into the National Air Space (NAS). The FAA faces a number of challenges as it moves toward UAS integration. Some of those challenges will require the kind of research and analysis that only a Center of Excellence can provide.

We are encouraged that the FAA has taken a number of actions toward establishing the Center of Excellence. The release of a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) and public hearing in May of this year were steps in the right direction. It is our understanding that at the public hearing you stated your goal was to have the final RFP released by early August with a September 15, 2014, deadline for submission of proposals. We request an immediate update from you on your timeline for this process.

We are also concerned that questions about this process raised at a public hearing and on the FAA's website have yet to be answered. The answers to these questions will be critical as competitors formulate their proposals. We urge the FAA to provide answers to all questions as soon as possible so that interested competitors will have the best information available as they develop their proposals.

We believe the United States must continue to lead the world in the development and integration of UAS technology and that the integration of UAS into the NAS will provide significant strategic and economic benefits to the nation. Understanding how to safely and ethically integrate these systems into the NAS is a primary barrier to achieving those benefits. The Center of Excellence is crucial to ensuring the FAA has as much knowledge as is necessary to quickly overcome these challenges.

We look forward to a timely response to this letter and strongly urge you to move forward now in establishing the UAS Academic Center of Excellence.

Sincerely,



THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator



PAT ROBERTS
United States Senator



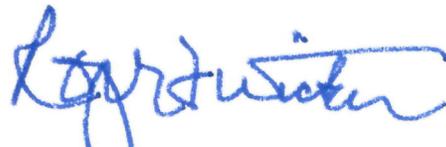
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