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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 24, 2014

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The Honorable Michael Huerta  
Administrator  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta,

As the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approaches its final decision regarding the selection of the Center of Excellence (COE) for Unmanned Aerial Systems, I wanted to call your attention to the proposal from the Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence (ASSURE) team. The University of North Dakota (UND) in Grand Forks, North Dakota, is a member of this 13-school team, and I firmly believe the ASSURE proposal can play a major role in assisting the FAA as it moves forward with decisions and research on UAS integration.

The ASSURE proposal represents a technically-sound response to the COE proposal. Its core partners include some of the most experienced aviation schools in the nation. When one includes affiliate members and over 100 partners from the UAS industry, the ASSURE team stretches across much of the United States and provides a wide base of both academic and industry experience and knowledge.

For North Dakota, the COE project fits perfectly with our growing emphasis on UAS development and research. As you know, North Dakota hosts an FAA UAS Test Site and UND represents one of the nation's oldest UAS education programs. During your visit to North Dakota earlier this year, you saw firsthand some of the exciting UAS work we are doing at UND. Additionally, North Dakota hosts Department of Defense UAS missions in Grand Forks and Fargo, making our state one of the growing UAS hubs in the nation.

I understand the challenge the FAA faces in making the COE selection. I am closely monitoring the selection process, and I look forward to working with you on the ASSURE proposal and successfully integrating UAS into the national airspace. Thank you for your consideration for this request.

Sincerely,



Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senate

CC: The Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary of Transportation

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