

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  OF AIRPORT EXECUTIVES

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June 16, 2015

The Honorable Diane Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

On behalf of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and our members across the country who manage and operate the nation's public-use and general aviation airports, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in drafting legislation – the Consumer Drone Safety Act – aimed at safely integrating Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into the National Airspace System (NAS). We look forward to working with you and your staff to advance this important measure through the legislative process.

While the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has published a proposed rule to address the operation of small commercial UAS, there remains a regulatory void for the hundreds of thousands of readily attainable consumer unmanned aircraft being purchased and flown for recreational purposes each year. In simple terms, the pace of technological development for these systems has far outpaced the ability of government to address the very real operational and safety concerns that have accompanied their wide-scale deployment.

Traditionally, the model aircraft community has been very effective in self-regulation, and operators have typically adhered to FAA rules and community-based organizations' guidelines. However, the barriers to entry for potential operators have become so minimal due to the low costs and availability of new systems that many untrained and uninformed users are operating in a manner which poses potential risks to both manned aircraft and civilians on the ground.

In our view, the Consumer Drone Safety Act provides a positive step in mitigating the potential risks associated with this wave of new technology. Passage of this measure would result in much needed technological and operational policy safeguards in the enhanced risk areas near and around our nation's airports. Furthermore, the legislation would achieve significant steps toward safety without going so far as to stifle the growth of an industry which will have many useful and productive applications.

Again, we applaud your efforts in promoting safety throughout the National Airspace System and look forward to working with you to gain passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Joel Bacon  
Executive Vice President, Federal Affairs  
American Association of Airport Executives