

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 12, 2019

The Honorable Steven Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson:

We write to you today regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) recent postponement of the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) for the remote identification of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to December of this year. As you know, we previously sent a letter to Secretary Chao in April regarding the significant delay of this NPRM, and again wish to express the importance of the swift publication of this rule to full integration of UAS into the national airspace system (NAS).

Additionally, we seek clarification regarding the June 6, 2019, Drone Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting, during which the FAA requested the DAC to develop recommendations for voluntary implementation of certain aspects of UAS remote identification before publication of the final rule. While voluntary deployment of remote identification equipment could be helpful to the FAA in promulgating a final rule, interim guidance from the agency will be critical to ensuring that any pre-rule voluntary action taken by industry is conducted in a safe and consistent manner nationwide.

The FAA has demonstrated past success with voluntary industry collaboration, exemplified by the Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability and the Drone Integration Pilot Program, which have both provided crucial data and interim solutions to better inform the FAA's long-term plans for UAS traffic management. We urge the FAA to apply lessons learned from oversight of these programs to any framework for voluntary industry implementation of remote identification.


UAS remote identification will provide the foundation for future UAS rulemakings, and is vital to the safe and efficient integration of UAS into the NAS. To better understand the FAA's plans for voluntary implementation pursuant to the tasking at the June 6, 2019, DAC meeting, we respectfully request answers to the following questions:

1. How does the FAA plan to administer and facilitate any voluntary deployment of remote identification equipment to ensure these deployments are carried out in a nationally consistent manner?

2. Will the FAA publish any interim rule or other informal guidelines regarding voluntary deployment of remote identification?
3. Does the FAA believe that the remote identification NPRM and final rule will be further delayed as a result of any voluntary actions?
4. How will the FAA ensure that any voluntary actions taken by industry in the pre-rule period do not substantially differ from requirements laid out by the NPRM or final rule?
5. How does the FAA plan to use information gathered from voluntary implementation to inform the rulemaking process?

Thank you for your continued work to safely integrate UAS into the nation's airspace. We would greatly appreciate a written response to the questions above by September 27, 2019. Additionally, we have not received a formal response to our April 29, 2019 letter, and would appreciate a written response as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE
United States Senator



EDWARD J. MARKEY
United States Senator