

ALERT

Congress Passes FAA Extension, Includes Provisions on Unmanned Aircraft Systems

July 14, 2016

On July 14, 2016 Congress passed a bill to extend the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) authority through September 30, 2017. The text of the bill, which will be sent to the president for signature before tomorrow's expiration of the FAA's current authorization, can be found [here](#).

The bill includes these points of particular relevance to Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS):

- Directs the FAA Administrator to facilitate development of standards for remotely identifying UAS operators and owners.
- Requires small UAS manufacturers to make a safety statement available to owners of small UAS at the time of delivery.
- Streamlines processes for approval and interagency cooperation to deploy unmanned aircraft during emergencies, such as disaster responses and wildfires.
- Prohibits unmanned aircraft users from interfering with emergency response activities and raises civil penalties to not more than \$20,000 for those found in violation.
- Creates new processes to detect, identify, and mitigate unauthorized operation of unmanned aircraft around airports and critical infrastructure.
- Directs the FAA Administrator to create an emergency exemption process for UAS.
- Supports continued development of an UAS Traffic Management plan.
- Allows operators or proprietors of fixed site facilities to apply for designation to restrict the operation of UAS in close

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Practice Areas

Telecom, Media & Technology
Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

proximity to their facilities.

- Instructs the FAA to create a process wherein applicants, particularly utilities, can petition the FAA for authority to operate beyond visual line of sight and during the day or at night.
- Provides for the testing or modeling of UAS colliding with various size aircraft in various operational settings.