

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to use the definitions in section 40125 of title 49, United States Code, in determining whether an unmanned aircraft conducting aeronautical research flights qualifies for public aircraft status under that section, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. WYDEN, and Ms. HEITKAMP) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to use the definitions in section 40125 of title 49, United States Code, in determining whether an unmanned aircraft conducting aeronautical research flights qualifies for public aircraft status under that section, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Safe Skies for Un-
5 manned Aircraft Act of 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. PUBLIC AIRCRAFT OPERATING STATUS OF UN-**
2 **MANNED AIRCRAFT USED IN AERONAUTICAL**
3 **RESEARCH FLIGHTS; SAFETY PROCEDURES**
4 **FOR SUCH FLIGHTS.**

5 (a) PUBLIC AIRCRAFT OPERATING STATUS.—In de-
6 termining whether an unmanned aircraft used in the con-
7 duct of aeronautical research qualifies as a public aircraft
8 under section 40125 of title 49, United States Code, the
9 Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration
10 shall—

11 (1) for purposes of determining whether the air-
12 craft is used for a commercial purpose, use only the
13 definition given that term in subsection (a) of such
14 section; and

15 (2) for purposes of determining whether the air-
16 craft, including airborne platforms and systems, is
17 used for aeronautical research and platform-based
18 research, include atmospheric and natural resources
19 research, meteorological observation, and airborne
20 astronomy as aeronautical research.

21 (b) PROCEDURES FOR BEYOND-LINE-OF-SIGHT OP-
22 ERATIONS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
24 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Adminis-
25 trator shall develop and implement procedures for
26 safe, beyond-line-of-sight operations in the national

1 airspace system by unmanned aircraft conducting
2 aeronautical research.

3 (2) CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPROVAL.—In de-
4 veloping the procedures required by paragraph (1)
5 relating to beyond-line-of-sight operations by un-
6 manned aircraft described in that paragraph, the
7 Administrator shall ensure that a decision to ap-
8 prove such an operation takes into consideration the
9 safety of the entire operation, including whether any
10 provisions required to be included in the certificate
11 of authorization for the operation result in addi-
12 tional safety risk to any individual associated with
13 the operation.

14 (c) UNMANNED AIRCRAFT DEFINED.—In this sec-
15 tion, the term “unmanned aircraft” has the meaning given
16 that term in section 331 of the FAA Modernization and
17 Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–95; 49 U.S.C.
18 40101 note).