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November 12, 2013

Representative Shelley Hughes  
Alaska State Legislature  
600 E. Railroad Ave  
Wasilla AK, 99654

Senator Donny Olson  
Alaska State Legislature  
716 W. 4th Ave. Suite 560  
Anchorage AK, 99501-2133

Dear Representative Hughes and Senator Olson:

I am pleased to provide supporting comments to the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UASs) Legislative Task Force for consideration as you move forward with recommendations on the use of UASs in the public, private and commercial arena. I commend the Task Force for taking a robust look at the public interest issues associated with UASs.

I recognize the valuable role these systems can play in public safety, law enforcement, land management, and agriculture, among other sectors. The potential economic benefits of a carefully managed effort to integrate UASs in the airspace are demonstrably large. Already, ConocoPhillips contractors have sent a ScanEagle aircraft offshore from Wainwright for exploratory purposes. One of the University of Fairbanks' (UAF) unmanned aircraft helped a Russian tanker in 2011-2012 to find a path to deliver fuel. The FAA is approving unmanned flights nationwide and I support the state's interest in safely and responsibly considering the use of UASs across industries.

As we look at evaluating UAS implementation, the following issues must be addressed: safety, privacy, controlling information, certification and balancing data collection with privacy. If we can use unmanned aircraft efficaciously to conduct mapping, for search and rescue operations, crash investigations, pipeline inspections or monitoring oil spills and wildfires then we must look at the potential for implementation in Alaska.

In 2012, FAA was tasked with determining how to integrate UAS into the National Airspace System. In this effort, an economic analysis was completed by the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International providing useful data. This study indicates that the industry impact totals more than \$13.6 billion and more than 70,000 new jobs from 2015 to 2017. In Alaska, this amounts to a \$19 million economic effect with 95 additional jobs. What is needed is a regulatory structure for commercial and civil development to take advantage of this opportunity in a responsible manner.

The FAA is working to integrate UASs into the national airspace by 2015. As the FAA works to establish six test sites for evaluating how to accomplish the integration, the Legislative Task Force is well poised to address concerns of privacy, overreach, uses and regulations. I support FAA's consideration of UAF as an arctic test site to further vet the use of UASs in diverse terrain and airspace.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Unmanned Aerial Systems Legislative Task Force process. I support your efforts to evaluate all issues associated with the use of unmanned aircraft in Alaska and to consider the application of these systems for public, private and commercial purposes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lisa Murkowski", with a large, stylized initial "L".

Lisa Murkowski

United States Senator