

Client Alert

October 2017

President Trump and Secretary Chao Announce Drone Integration Program

Following a [directive](#) signed by President Trump on October 25, 2017, the Department of Transportation is partnering with state and local governments in select jurisdictions to launch an initiative that will safely test and validate advanced operations for drones. The program will help tackle the most significant challenges in integrating drones into the national airspace while reducing risks to public safety and security. It will also provide regulatory certainty and stability to local governments and communities, UAS owners and operators who are accepted into the program.

Results from the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Integration Pilot Program will be used to accelerate the safe integration of UAS into the national airspace and uncover the benefits of unmanned technology in the economy. It is intended to help the USDOT and FAA:

- develop a regulatory framework to allow for more complex low-altitude operations
- identify ways to balance local and national interests
- improve communications with local, state and tribal jurisdictions
- address security and privacy risks, and
- accelerate the approval of operations that currently require special authorizations

The pilot program will evaluate a variety of operational concepts, including night operations, flights over people, flights beyond the pilot's line of sight, package delivery, detect-and-avoid technologies, counter-UAS security operations, and the reliability and security of data links between pilot and aircraft. Industries that could see immediate opportunities from the program include commerce, photography, emergency management, precision agriculture, and infrastructure inspections and monitoring.

Prospective local government participants are directed to partner with the private sector in developing pilot proposals. The USDOT will invite a minimum of five partnerships after reviewing all applications. More information about how the applications will be evaluated and how the program will work will be released by the USDOT in a Federal Register Notice in the coming days.

About the Hunton & Williams LLP UAS Team

The UAS team advises and assists companies in connection with all aspects of integrating UAS technology into their operations, including fostering internal stakeholder support; advising with regard to privacy, intellectual property, land use and real property rights, and insurance issues; tracking, analyzing, and advocating with respect to existing and pending federal and state legislative matters; contracting with UAS test sites and vendors; negotiating UAS fleet acquisition agreements; and obtaining FAA approvals, exemptions and/or waivers. For more information, we invite you to visit www.hunton.com or contact any of the members of the UAS team listed below.

Contacts

Michael E. Sievers
msievers@hunton.com

Lisa J. Sotto
lsotto@hunton.com

Eric J. Murdock
emurdock@hunton.com

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