



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

January 13, 2017

Mr. Gregory S. Walden  
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP  
1333 New Hampshire Avenue, NW.  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Walden:

Thank you for your November 14, 2016, letter supporting the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Request for Information (RFI). The Small UAV Coalition has provided thoughtful input and substantive suggestions regarding the collective public-private efforts to integrate Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into the National Airspace System (NAS). Your analysis and suggestions are being reviewed by FAA experts responsible for the systems and capabilities you reference, including the Notification and Authorization (N&A) information sharing demonstrations, UAS Traffic Management (UTM) efforts, and remote identification standards development.

We appreciate your recognition and support of our RFI process for N&A demonstrations. We also appreciate your suggestion to "focus in the near term on developing a low altitude airspace UTM." We expect to continue to use the RFI process to assist the FAA and members of the Small UAV coalition focus on upcoming efforts to integrate UAS into the NAS.

We recognize the interrelationships among the areas you have cited and are working to chart a logical and careful course to develop capabilities that will meet the objectives you noted from the N&A Information Sharing RFI. We seek to find the fastest path to realizing capabilities for Small UAS operations in the NAS that ensures safety and security, orderly and equitable access; and maximum private sector participation and partnership.

We greatly value industry partnerships that have developed across multiple activities including the seven UAS Test Sites, the Focus Area Pathfinder Initiative, the NASA-led UTM research initiative, the N&A RFI, and others. We are committed to productive collaboration with the private sector to establish UAS operational capabilities as soon as feasible.

You also offered two areas of guiding principles for the N&A process and the UTM systems. Regarding the first area, we agree that the N&A process must be automated to the maximum practicable extent, including the waiver process. Among other things, the information sharing N&A RFI is intended to demonstrate such automation. Following demonstration of basic

capabilities for data exchange, we look forward to the continued evolution of automation for increasingly complex operations such as you describe in your letter.

Regarding the second area, we agree that maximum participation by the private sector is the goal for low-altitude UAS operations. We welcome development and fielding of commercial UTM capabilities and look forward to working with industry to address the challenges associated with accommodating such operations in uncontrolled airspace as well as in proximity to controlled airspace classes. While FAA is not subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation, including Part 12, we can and do implement cooperative research agreements and, in fact, are doing so now in the development of integrated UAS operational frameworks. We will continue to make use of available options under the FAA Acquisition Management System and other authorities for fostering development of such capabilities.

Thank you again for taking time to provide your comments and input to this important national initiative. We look forward to continuing our collaborative relationship with your organization and membership through the various UAS initiatives.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me or Kate Howard, Acting Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs, at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Huerta", with a large circular flourish at the end.

Michael P. Huerta  
Administrator