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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
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ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

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Michael P. Huerta
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Huerta:

As you are aware, I have supported and participated in the legislative effort encouraging the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to integrate Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) into the National Airspace System (NAS). I am, however, concerned with the FAA's recent selection of six unmanned aircraft research sites. I request an immediate briefing to better understand how the FAA evaluated applicants and made its final site selections.

With rapid developments in unmanned technology occurring over the past several years, the federal government has been slow to react and address the issue of airspace integration. As a result, we now have significant private sector growth and investment in commercial use of UAS constrained by a sluggish bureaucratic process. Though the recent test site selection process is a sign of improvement and progress on behalf of the FAA, I believe the selected test sites may have overlooked significant factors that could harm or slow the integration process going forward.

For years, the FAA has incorrectly viewed UAS as an emerging technology when in fact private entities as well as public agencies like NASA and the Department of Defense (DOD) have been developing and utilizing these systems for several decades. This research and development work has led to a highly experienced and niche workforce centralized in a select few communities around the country. One of those communities, Dayton, Ohio, participated in the test site selection process. In addition to being the birthplace of aviation, Dayton is home to numerous DOD and private sector entities specializing in unmanned technology. The hardworking men and women of organizations like the Air Force Research Lab (AFRL), located at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, have spent years advancing unmanned technology and addressing specific challenges such as Sense & Avoid, Airworthiness Certifications, and Command & Control.

I believe the decision by the FAA not to co-locate an unmanned test center with a community like Dayton could lead to redundancy and an inefficient use of taxpayer dollars by attempting to recreate already existing infrastructure and research initiatives. Most importantly, I

believe the FAA's site selections could lead to the development of an unsafe domestic airspace environment by not properly incorporating and utilizing the unique expertise of communities like Dayton. It is my firm belief that any matter involving the safety and security of the NAS should be undertaken by the most experienced and knowledgeable minds in the country. Unfortunately, the current plan does not appear to do that.

I appreciate your review of my concerns and await a more detailed briefing on this matter. I look forward to working with you to ensure that the UAS integration effort is a success and that our skies remain the safest and most advanced in the world.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress