

**Oral Statement**

**Statement of Captain Tim Canoll  
President, Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l  
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship**

**“Up in the Air: Examining the Commercial Applications  
of Unmanned Aircraft for Small Business”  
March 10, 2016**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Thank you, Chairman Vitter, Ranking Member Shaheen, and the committee for the opportunity to testify today.

The Air Line Pilots Association, International has long stood in strong support of safely integrating unmanned aircraft systems or UAS into the national airspace.

We recognize that UAS can perform specialized tasks efficiently and safely. ALPA applauds the entrepreneurs who are identifying new uses for UAS to help advance small business and the national economy. We also commend the members of Congress who have expressed interest in UAS.

In this context of our support for innovation and growth, ALPA's greatest concern will always be *safety*.

The U.S. airspace is the most dynamic on the planet. It is also the safest. We cannot rush a UAS integration process that must begin and end with making certain that the high level of aviation safety that exists today continues tomorrow.

We know that unsafe situations involving UAS are occurring right now. Each month, the FAA receives more than 100 reports of UAS sightings from pilots and others.

In Louisiana, for example, air traffic control reported that an airliner on final approach to Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport observed a UAS at 500 feet just one mile from the runway.

In Manchester, New Hampshire, the air traffic control tower received a report from an airliner of a UAS hovering at 2,800 feet about 7.5 miles northeast of the airport and on the arrival path.

While it is almost certain that these events involved recreational rather than commercial UAS operators, they demonstrate the need for UAS “pilot” education and enhanced safety.

For airline pilots like me, UAS often literally appear out of the blue. They are much smaller than other aircraft, and they move more slowly than airliners. As a result of this difference, UAS are extremely difficult to see in flight.

While the FAA is making progress, it needs to address *all* UAS uses with a full regulatory safety framework.

ALPA's near-term action plan contains four parts:

### **Education**

Anyone flying UAS, no matter the size, must understand the aircraft, the airspace, and the other aircraft that share it. ALPA maintains that commercially operated UAS should be flown by pilots who have the necessary knowledge. All U.S. transportation forms—marine, rail, roads, and air—require commercial licenses for commercial operations. UAS should be no different.

While resources exist such as the “Know Before You Fly” campaign, not every UAS owner makes the effort to learn about safety regulations.

We urge the FAA to do more to reach out to small businesses and other users regarding UAS safety.

## **Registration**

ALPA is pleased that more than 342,000 UAS owners have already registered with the FAA. While we applaud the civil and criminal penalties for those who don't register, ALPA maintains that point-of-sale registration is essential.

## **Technology**

If UAS operate in airspace intended for airliners, or if they could end up there, airline pilots need to be able to see them on cockpit displays, and controllers need to see them on their radar scopes. The UAS must also be equipped with active technologies to avoid a collision with manned aircraft. The FAA should identify resources to develop UAS-centric collision-avoidance technologies in FY 2016 and adopt them in FY 2017.

In addition, if regulations restrict UAS from operating in a location, the UAS must have technology that cannot be overridden to prevent it from flying there. The FAA must also continue to evaluate technologies to identify UAS and operator location.

## **Penalties and enforcement**

ALPA calls for the full enforcement of the civil and criminal penalties regarding UAS. If the FAA intends to rely on first responders to ensure compliance, it must do more to inform local, state, and national law enforcement about their responsibility and authority.

Let me close by underscoring that UAS safety in the national airspace is serious business—not only for small business but for every airline passenger and cargo shipper.

This registered UAS, for example, which is classified as a “micro” UAS because it is under 4.4 pounds, can fly as high as 6,600 feet for 15 minutes. It could easily end up in the airspace I occupy when landing at Baton Rouge, Manchester, or any airport.

With ALPA’s plan, and Congress providing the FAA with a long-term source of stable funding through a full reauthorization, small businesses can capitalize on the opportunities offered by UAS while maintaining our industry’s extraordinary level of safety.

Thank you.