



Marion C. Blakey
President and Chief Executive Officer

February 1, 2011

The Honorable J. Randolph Babbitt
FAA Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Administrator Babbitt:

You and I recognize the growing importance of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). These aircraft have tremendous potential to contribute to the economic, technological, and competitive well-being of the U.S. To ensure we move forward and keep pace with international development in this new, fast-growing field of aviation, the leading UAS manufacturers believe the safe and orderly integration of UAS into the National Airspace requires a UAS-specific strategic plan.

Integrating UAS into the NAS could create tens of thousands of new jobs and hundreds of millions in wages for the U.S.¹ UAS are urgently needed to perform missions of vital importance to national security and defense and emergency management in addition to scientific and commercial applications. Delaying integration will impose costs on the U.S. economy as other countries with the necessary standards perform the UAS research, development, and production. We are confident that with industry and FAA working together UAS will be successfully integrated in a timely manner to the benefit of the public and all stakeholders.

In his 2011 State of the Union Address, President Obama said "We need to out-innovate, out-educate and out-build the rest of the world." We propose that FAA begin this innovation by finalizing a comprehensive strategic plan for UAS integration. This plan would identify the necessary policies, regulatory changes and procedures, as well as airspace and global harmonization requirements. The near-term, tactical needs can be addressed in parallel in order to maximize benefits and minimize delays. A full list of our recommendations is attached to this letter.

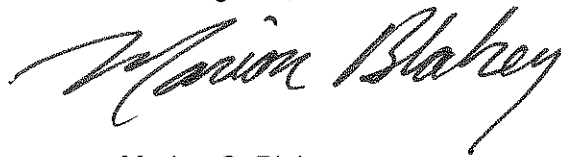
Our member companies, which include Boeing, Lockheed Martin, General Atomics, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon, stand ready to contribute to any of these efforts and other activities. We currently provide dozens of UAS-knowledgeable engineers, designers and operators to the ongoing standards development effort in RTCA Special Committee 203.

¹ *Unmanned Aircraft System Integration into the United States National Airspace System: An Assessment of the Impact on Job Creation in the U.S. Aerospace Industry*, page 3. Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (May 2010)

The Honorable J. Randolph Babbitt
Page 2
February 1, 2011

A strategic plan for UAS integration will lay the foundation for productive government-industry collaboration in this area—a conviction that I will share during my Congressional testimony on February 9th. AIA looks forward to discussing this mutually beneficial opportunity with you further and Cortney Robinson, our Director of Civil Aviation Infrastructure, will contact your staff to set up an appointment. We'll gladly provide greater detail on our vision and look forward to contributing to this effort.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marion Blakey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marion C. Blakey

Attachment

Near-term recommendations:

- Accelerate the publication of CFR 107 (sUAS), preferably before June 2011.
- Include UAS in the FAA Aerospace Forecast.
- Increase the priority of UAS integration within FAA to take advantage of emerging market opportunities and job creation.
- Develop an efficient process to approve manufacturer-controlled/FAA-supervised UAS test and development airspace to accelerate new product development and help lower costs.
- Accelerate the review and publication of regulatory products from the FAA UAS Control Station and FAA UAS Rotorcraft workgroups.
- FAA should authorize the near-term use of STANAG, ASTM, or other globally-accepted alternate means of compliance with existing FAA regulations.

AIA offers the expertise and experience to support each of these recommendations.