

June 26, 2017

Congressman Bill Shuster, Chairman
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Congressman Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

To Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio;

On behalf of the Consumer Technology Association (CTA)™ I offer our comments on the unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) reform subtitle in the Aviation Innovation, Reform & Reauthorization (AIRR) Act. CTA is the trade association representing the \$287 billion U.S. consumer technology industry, including manufacturers, retailers, component suppliers and service providers with an interest in UAS. Every day, our more than 2,200 member companies – 80 percent of which are small businesses and startups – are innovating, introducing extraordinary products and services, and creating American jobs.

Drones will improve our lives. They will quickly deliver life-saving medication, efficiently increase crop yields while reducing costly inputs, create safer work environments for building and bridge maintenance, and find lost children. Soon, they will benefit tens of millions of Americans. Given the right regulatory environment, CTA projects we will reach one million UAS flights per day in the United States in the next 20 years – and we can expect more than 100,000 U.S. jobs created in the next decade.

CTA appreciates the committee's leadership on integrating UAS in our national airspace. As you well know, there are complex issues surrounding UAS integration that require a thoughtful approach including close collaboration with stakeholders. To that end, CTA appreciates the AIRR Act's approach to determining how to deal with federal, state, and local interests in managing low altitude airspace. An organized and lawful approach to regulation impacting UAS at all levels has been a priority for CTA. The FAA has tasked the Drone Advisory Committee (DAC) with assessing state and local government interests and making consensus stakeholder recommendations regarding those interests and the relative roles of federal, state, and local governments concerning low-altitude UAS operations. CTA supports (and participates in) the work of the DAC and believes this is the right approach to resolving the jurisdictional issues related to drones and drone operations. We appreciate the committee refraining from legislating in this space and instead encouraging further study of the issue, including consideration of the recommendations that come from the DAC.

The AIRR Act also includes several key safety and accountability provisions. CTA strongly supported the FAA registration rule, which provides an important platform for safety and accountability for drone users. CTA is concerned the Taylor decision invalidating the registration rule will have an adverse

effect on drone safety, and supports the AIRR Act provision (45509) to provide statutory authority to the FAA for the drone registry.

Our nation needs a regulatory framework for the deployment of UAS traffic management (“UTM”) technology to realize the transformative potential of UAS for services in rural and urban areas alike. Similar to our national highway system and its exponential benefits for interstate travel, a network of communication and guidance systems for our low-altitude airspace will be the foundation for us to revolutionize the way we all do business. CTA applauds the committee for recognizing the need for UTM implementation, and encourages the committee to include a more expedited rulemaking in section 45506 of the AIRR Act.

As the representative of the consumer technology industry, CTA advocates for clear rules authorizing the safe use and deployment of drones. Technology is changing the way we live and creating new opportunities for professional and economic development and creating American jobs. Our government can help by requiring rules that ensure safety while not freezing innovation and allowing new technologies to save American lives and enhance American commerce.

We appreciate the committee’s leadership on integrating UAS into our national airspace, as well as your consideration of our comments. We look forward to working with you to ensure the United States continues to lead the world in innovation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Shapiro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" and last name "Shapiro" clearly distinguishable.

Gary Shapiro
President and CEO

CC: Members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure