



Federal Aviation
Administration

Press Release – FAA Announces Request for Proposals For Unmanned Aircraft Systems Research and Test Sites

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WASHINGTON – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today solicited proposals from state and local governments, eligible universities and other public entities to develop six unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) research and test sites around the country. Through the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, Congress directed the FAA to establish this program to conduct critical research into how best to safely integrate UAS systems into the national airspace over the next several years and what certification and navigation requirements will need to be established.

The expanded use of UAS represents a major next step in aviation innovation and will present economic opportunities both for the communities that are selected for this pilot program and for the aerospace industry in general.

The introduction of these systems into the airspace will also require ensuring that privacy is appropriately protected. Today, the FAA is requesting public input into FAA efforts to ensure that privacy questions surrounding the pilot program are properly addressed. The FAA's proposed privacy approach emphasizes transparency, public engagement and compliance with existing law.

"Our focus is on maintaining and improving the safety and efficiency of the world's largest aviation system," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "This research will give us valuable information about how best to ensure the safe introduction of this advanced technology into our nation's skies."

"We expect to learn how unmanned aircraft systems operate in different environments and how they will impact air traffic operations. The test sites will also inform the agency as we develop standards for certifying unmanned aircraft and determine necessary air traffic requirements," said FAA Administrator Michael Huerta.

The FAA technical evaluation of submitted proposals will include consideration of geographic diversity, climatic diversity, location of ground infrastructure and research needs, population density and air traffic density, as well as specific goals and objectives to be accomplished. The combined attributes across the test sites should provide the appropriate environment and opportunities to test UAS, although, each test site will not have to provide all attributes.

Along with the test site selection process, the FAA is sending a notice to the Federal Register asking the public to review the draft privacy language and provide comments. The FAA will consider all comments submitted as it develops the final privacy requirements. These requirements will be included in the agreements between the test sites and the FAA. The privacy proposal is available today on the FAA's website – [Federal Register Request for Comment \(Copy Only\) \(PDF\)](http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/uas/media/UASTS_RFC_FR_notice_2-14-2013.pdf) (http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/uas/media/UASTS_RFC_FR_notice_2-14-2013.pdf) .

Under the FAA privacy proposal each test site operator must ensure that its privacy policies are informed by Fair Information Practice Principles, a widely accepted framework of privacy principles at the core of numerous federal and state privacy laws.

Each site operator and its team members will be required to operate in accordance with federal, state and other laws regarding the protection of an individual's right to privacy. If the U.S. Department of Justice or a state's law enforcement authority files criminal or civil charges over a potential violation of such laws, the FAA may take appropriate action, including suspending or modifying the agreement authorizing test site operations until the privacy proceedings are completed. If the proceedings demonstrate the operation was in violation of the law, the FAA may terminate the operating agreement.

Prior to the close of the Federal Register comment period, the FAA will host an online listening session to solicit additional comments on the proposed privacy approach. The agency will publish a notice providing details for the listening session sufficiently in advance with full details.

The request for comments on the proposed UAS test site privacy approach, including instructions for filing comments, will be published in the Federal Register and the public will have 60 days to comment. The FAA will post all comments it receives, without change, to: <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information the commenter provides.

The FAA anticipates selection of the six test sites will occur later this year.

For additional information please see <http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/uas/> (<http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/uas/>) . Applicants will have 80 days to submit their research and test site proposal to the FAA through the Screening Information Request (SIR) process. The SIR is available on the FAA Contracting Opportunities website (<http://faaco.faa.gov>). In developing the SIR and to ensure transparency, the agency has previously asked for input on the test site program. In March 2012, the FAA issued a request for comments and held two webinars in April 2012 about the test site program.

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