



SMALL UAV
COALITION
*A Partnership for
Safety & Innovation*

April 6, 2018

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23218

RE: Senate Bill 526

Dear Governor Northam:

The Small UAV Coalition¹ appreciates Virginia's longstanding support for the continued development of the unmanned aerial systems (UAS) industry. Many Coalition member companies have partnered with the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership based at Virginia Tech to develop and test innovative new commercial UAS applications that offer great economic promise and consumer benefits. The Coalition also appreciates Virginia's efforts to limit a patchwork of local UAS-related laws and ordinances that would inhibit the continued development of this promising industry, particularly while the Department of Transportation stands up the UAS Integration Pilot Program to demonstrate exciting commercial applications nationwide.

As an organization of commercial UAS companies, the Coalition has closely followed Senate Bill 526 and its potential to negatively impact the ability of commercial operators – which are safe, responsible stewards of UAS technology – to contribute to the Commonwealth's economy to and deliver services to Virginians, both now and in the future.

Most UAS-related legislative proposals are premature because they cannot anticipate how to best address a UAS ecosystem that does not yet fully exist. Industry is partnering with government stakeholders to develop technical solutions like remote identification and tracking and an unmanned traffic management (UTM) system that will address many safety, security, and privacy concerns associated with UAS integration. Many of these solutions already exist, but need regulations to be deployed.

¹ Small UAV Coalition member companies include Amazon Prime Air, Google X, Intel, Kespry, PrecisionHawk, Verizon, AGI, Airmap, Flirtey, Fresh Air Educators, T-Mobile, and Walmart.

Fortunately, building on the work of the UAS Remote Identification and Tracking Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is currently preparing remote identification and tracking standards that will provide a mechanism for law enforcement to identify UAS. The Coalition supports this effort and encourages the FAA to move forward as quickly as possible to provide law enforcement with this important tool to identify and prosecute dangerous or irresponsible operators and separate them from those conducting safe, commercial operations within the confines of the law.

To that end, the Coalition asks that you return Senate Bill 526 to the legislature with a recommendation that implementation of the bill's aerial trespass provision (Section 18.2-121.3) be delayed until remote identification and tracking standards are in place to provide law enforcement with a mechanism to identify operators that are in violation of the law.

Sincerely,

