

Chris Polychron, CIPS, CRS, GRI
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**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
DIVISION**

Jerry Giovaniello, Senior Vice President
Gary Weaver, Vice President
Joe Ventrone, Vice President
Scott Reiter, Vice President
Jamie Gregory, Deputy Chief Lobbyist

500 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001-2020
Ph. 202-383-1194 Fax 202-383-7580
www.REALTOR.org

March 23, 2015

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte
Chairman
U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Aviation
Operations, Safety, and Security
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Aviation
Operations, Safety, and Security
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Ayotte and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of the over 1 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), I thank the subcommittee for holding this hearing on “Unmanned Aircraft Systems: Key Considerations Regarding Safety, Innovation, Economic Impact, and Privacy.” REALTORS® have demonstrated a strong interest in using unmanned aerial systems (UAS) for marketing properties. NAR supports the FAA’s proposed regulations for the commercial use of UAS, as they will allow for safe use of the technology by the real estate industry.

REALTORS® are excited about the potential to use UAS technology to take photographs and video footage of property listings for residential, commercial, and land sales or leases. In fact, a REALTOR® from Arizona was one of the first people to successfully apply for and receive a “Section 333” waiver, currently the only avenue available to fly a UAS for commercial purposes. NAR was thus pleased when the FAA released its proposed rulemaking on integrating small UAS for commercial use into the National Air Space (NAS) in February 2015. This is the first step toward a regulatory environment where commercial drone use is legal and has prescribed federal guidelines.

At the same time, NAR understands the need to balance the opportunities for commercial use of UAS with protecting the privacy and safety of citizens and other users of the NAS. As potential end-users of this technology, REALTORS® want clear regulation that permits the commercial application of UAS in a way that is affordable to users and safe for their communities, both on the ground and in the NAS. The FAA’s most recent proposed rules are a start, and are an improvement over the current regulatory scheme, but they are not expected to be finalized until 2017. In the meantime, the temporary use of Section 333 waivers for the commercial use of UAS is a slow and complicated process, which we hope the FAA will streamline for consumers until the final rules come out.

Again, thank you for holding this hearing. NAR looks forward to working with Congress and the FAA to create a safe and reasonable regulatory environment for the commercial use of UAS.

Sincerely,



Chris Polychron
2015 President, National Association of REALTORS®

cc: U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security

