



February 9, 2016

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
2409 Rayburn House Office Building

Dear Chairman Smith,

The National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) would like to thank you for sponsoring H.R. 4489, the FAA Leadership in Groundbreaking High-Tech Research and Development Act, or FLIGHT R&D Act.

NAAA represents over 1,350 aerial application businesses across the nation that protect our food and forestry, fight fires, and play an important role in protecting public health by combating disease-carrying mosquitos. Each of these businesses have pilots who must dodge a variety of obstacles every day, including towers, wires, and now unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). H.R. 4489 will help to ensure that UAS operators are approved for flight through section 333 exemptions only when quantitative risk analysis shows it to be prudent, allowing agricultural aviators and UAS operators alike to fly without unnecessary risk. Moreover, the Act will help to inform the aviation industry about the threat UAS may pose to manned aircraft, finally answering the question: “What will happen if a drone hits a plane?”

NAAA also works with UAS operators themselves, who use these innovative devices for precision agriculture. We’re happy to see the FLIGHT R&D Act improve the UAS R&D roadmap to help the UAS and general aviation communities better understand and predict the future of UAS technology. Equally important, this roadmap will help UAS developers realize which R&D priorities should be focused on to facilitate the safe and efficient integration of UAS into the National Airspace System.

Lastly, NAAA strongly supports section 42, Aviation Fuel Research, Development, and Usage. Piston engine aircraft are roughly one-third of our industry’s total fleet. Section 42 will provide a needed boost to ensure that effective fuel for piston agricultural aircraft engines will be available in the event that leaded fuel is unobtainable.

In sum, H.R. 4489 will help to protect the safety of both manned and unmanned aircraft, provide insight into UAS technological developments, and help ensure piston engines have a fuel source for years to come. NAAA is happy to support these endeavors in the FLIGHT R&D Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew D. Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andrew" being the most prominent.

Andrew Moore
Executive Director