

Subject: Justification for Attendance at the Drone & AAM Policy Symposium

To Whom It May Concern,

I respectfully request approval to attend the Drone & Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Policy Symposium, taking place July 29–30, 2025, at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C. This event is a high-impact, interagency forum focused on aligning government policy with rapidly advancing industry capabilities in uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) and AAM technologies.

This year's symposium is especially timely and relevant given several recent federal actions and milestones that require direct coordination between agencies and industry to implement.

These include:

- **Executive Orders on Drone Integration & Airspace Security (June 2025):** Two Executive Orders, "Unleashing American Drone Dominance" and "Restoring American Airspace Sovereignty", direct federal agencies to establish clear procurement standards for NDAA-compliant UAS, accelerate BVLOS rulemaking, and modernize airspace security frameworks. Together, these actions prioritize secure domestic manufacturing, interagency coordination, and operational scalability for both commercial and public safety drone use and security.

The airspace sovereignty executive order mandates expanded detection and tracking authorities, grant access for SLTT entities, and federal guidance for critical infrastructure protection.

- **FAA Reauthorization Act Implementation:** : With the FAA Reauthorization Act now in the implementation phase, two long-delayed rulemakings, Part 108 for Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations and Section 2209 for critical infrastructure airspace protections, have been elevated to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) for interagency review. Both are explicitly prioritized in the June 2025 Executive Orders and **are expected to be in the public comment period during the Symposium**. Timely action on these rules is essential to deliver on Congressional mandates, provide needed clarity to operators and agencies, and maintain U.S. competitiveness in autonomous aviation. At the Symposium, FAA and interagency leaders will engage with stakeholders on implementation timelines and how recent executive actions will be operationalized to support innovation and national security.
- **Rising Threat of Unauthorized UAS Activity:**

The rise in unauthorized drone activity near airports, military sites, and public events has made counter-UAS (C-UAS) coordination a top national priority—an urgency underscored by the Restoring American Airspace Sovereignty Executive Order. As threats outpace current authorities and technologies, agencies at all levels face growing challenges in detection, mitigation, and response.

State, local, and tribal governments often lack the legal authority and resources to act effectively. Clear policy alignment, shared situational awareness, and intergovernmental coordination are urgently needed.

Federal C-UAS rules have not been updated since 2018, despite major shifts in the threat landscape. While the introduction of H.R. 8610, the Counter-UAS Authority Security, Safety, and Reauthorization Act, in the 118th Congress was a necessary start, similar legislation must advance this Congress to modernize authorities and close critical security gaps.

This year's Symposium will include focused sessions on cross-jurisdictional C-UAS frameworks, real-time airspace monitoring, and practical strategies for protecting critical infrastructure and high-risk events from malicious drone activity.

- **Operational Lessons and Domestic Security Implications:** Recent conflicts have shown how small UAS networks can be integrated into broader ISR and strike architectures. Events like Ukraine's Project Spider Web demonstrate the real-world necessity for resilient, low-cost, autonomous UAS solutions, which will be explored in unclassified sessions related to security and dual-use tech transitions.

Cost to Attend:

- **Government Member Rate:** \$199
- **Government Non-Member Rate:** \$299

These reduced rates are intended to support federal participation and remove cost as a barrier to critical interagency engagement.

Attending this event would support the following objectives:

- Gain up-to-date insight into evolving policy and regulatory frameworks for UAS and AAM integration at the federal, state and local levels
- Engage directly with industry partners to align on implementation pathways and technical feasibility
- Participate in interagency discussions around data governance, infrastructure planning, and compliance
- Represent our agency's interests and priorities in shaping standards for secure and scalable autonomy

Given the concentration of federal agencies participating, including FAA, DoD, DHS, NASA, DOT, DOC, FCC, NTIA, TSA and NIST, this symposium represents a rare and efficient opportunity for synchronized dialogue across civil, defense, and commercial stakeholders.

I am happy to provide a summary of key takeaways and recommendations following the event to support broader organizational awareness.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,