



February 18, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The Commercial Drone Alliance (“CDA”)¹ strongly supports the nomination of Michael Kratsios as Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Mr. Kratsios is a longtime champion for safe and secure commercial unmanned aircraft system (UAS, or drone) integration. We urge the Committee to swiftly consider and advance Mr. Kratsios’ nomination to this very important role at this critical time for the drone industry.

The commercial drone industry is delivering significant economic and societal benefits for millions of Americans. Commercial drone operations stretch across several industries, from commercial package delivery to inspections of critical infrastructure and utilities, generating millions of dollars in revenue and creating thousands of jobs. The drone industry is projected to contribute billions of dollars to the global economy over the next decade, with some projections as high as \$90 billion by 2030.² Indeed, Congress has repeatedly and rightly emphasized the tremendous potential of expanded UAS operations to enhance commercial and academic use, spur economic growth, and improve emergency response. With the right leadership and support, the UAS industry can play a critical role in re-establishing America’s leadership position in global aviation and automation technologies. The maturation of this domestic industrial base is critical to our current and future economic and national security interests. This is a national imperative.

¹ The CDA is an independent non-profit organization led by key leaders in the commercial drone industry. The CDA has actively participated in rulemakings and policy efforts to facilitate the safe and secure development and expansion of commercial drone operations. The CDA works with all levels of government to collaborate on policies for industry growth and seeks to educate the public on the safe and responsible use of commercial drones to achieve economic benefits and humanitarian gains. We bring together commercial drone end-users, manufacturers, service providers, advanced air mobility companies, drone security companies, and vertical markets including oil and gas, precision agriculture, construction, security, communications technology, infrastructure, newsgathering, filmmaking, and more. Learn more at <https://www.commercialdronealliance.org/>.

² Levitate Capital, *The Future of the Drone Economy: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Economic Potential, Market Opportunities, and Strategic Considerations in the Drone Economy 1* (Dec. 2020), <https://levitatecap.com/levitate/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Levitate-Capital-White-Paper.pdf>.

Mr. Kratsios understands these dynamics and has a clear record of support for American innovation and UAS technologies specifically. As Chief Technology Officer during President Trump’s first term, Mr. Kratsios worked tirelessly across the public and private sectors to enable expanded UAS operations and their safe integration into the National Airspace System (NAS). Mr. Kratsios spearheaded the Department of Transportation’s UAS Integration Pilot Program (UAS IPP), which brought the federal and state, local, and tribal governments together with private sector entities to accelerate safe UAS integration—including flights over people and beyond the remote pilot’s visual line of sight. The UAS IPP was an instrumental first step in leveraging drones for use cases such as expanding healthcare access and life-saving operations, surveying damage in the wake of natural disasters, enhancing precision agriculture, and increasing drones used to conduct infrastructure inspections. The UAS IPP also provided the FAA with essential information to improve remote identification and tracking systems, drone traffic management, and collision avoidance technologies. Now it is time to turn these learnings into actionable policy and regulations that enable safe, secure, and scalable commercial drone operations in the United States.

This year is critical to the long-term development of the domestic commercial drone industry. OSTP is a key voice for innovation within the federal government, serving as a driving force within the White House for advancing domestic technology development. Mr. Kratsios is well-suited to lead the effort necessary to update antiquated regulations which prevent drone operations from scaling to their potential. In particular, two new rules are currently in development and—when implemented—would contribute significantly to expanding drone operations. The first is a proposed rule to enable beyond visual line-of-sight (BVLOS) drone operations. When final, the BVLOS rule will accelerate safe drone operations across several industry sectors while also improving electronic conspicuity in the airspace. The second, commonly referred to as the “2209 rule,” will enable critical infrastructure proprietors and other sensitive fixed-site operators to request that drone operations be restricted over their facilities. As you know, under your leadership, the Committee recognized the importance of these rules and established timelines for both in The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, but neither has been published for comment.³ We expect Mr. Kratsios to advocate for the swift advancement of these actions and to hold agencies accountable for fulfilling their Congressional mandates.

Time is of the essence. Mr. Kratsios understands the technical and policy aspects of drone technology and the need for a regulatory regime that complements—not constrains—safe, scalable drone operations for the benefit of the American public. When the Committee completes its work, we urge the Senate to swiftly confirm Mr. Kratsios to this important role and look forward to partnering with him and the OSTP team to ensure the United States is the global leader in aviation into the next century of flight.

Sincerely,



Lisa Ellman
Executive Director
Commercial Drone Alliance

³ FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, Pub. L. No. 118-63, §§ 929, 930, 138 Stat. 1025, 1365–66 (2024).