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David J Nieuwsma
President
Avionics

January 5, 2021

The Honorable State Representative Jeff Delzer
House Appropriations Committee Chairman
2919 5th Street NW
Underwood, ND58576-9603

Dear Chairman Delzer,

I'm writing to you to express support for North Dakota's Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) industry and continued state investments in its future. Collins Aerospace, a business of Raytheon Technologies, has nearly 450 employees in Jamestown as part of our Cargo Systems business. We have been a part of the community for 50 years and we now have the opportunity to expand our presence and help your state become a visionary leader in UAS deployment.

Collins is a recognized partner in the statewide UAS network and specifically, the technology known as Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS). As one of three system integrators, Collins is collaborating with the Northern Plains UAS Test Site (NPUASTS) to support public and commercial UAS BVLOS flights within the state's airspace. We believe the capabilities of this technology are still being defined and North Dakota is poised to have a leading voice in setting the standards that will guide the future of the UAS ecosystem and how drones will be integrated into the National Airspace System (NAS).

This is an incredible opportunity. With the unprecedented rise in e-commerce due to the COVID-19 pandemic, consider the Legacy Fund allocation to VANTIS as an investment in better health care, future jobs and economic growth for your state. Imagine UAVs carrying precious vaccines or necessary medical supplies to rural hospitals in hours not days; conducting pipeline inspections via drone at a fraction of the time and expense needed currently, thus increasing safety and freeing up funds for further enhancements; or helping a small manufacturer access necessary parts to keep its machines running and employees on the job.

Investments in the UAS network today will have impact beyond our current generation and imagination. As an elected official you have the difficult job of balancing fiscal responsibility with an overwhelming number of near-term budget needs. However, a Legacy fund allocation to VANTIS does not compete with those near term needs – in fact it offers an opportunity to make a prudent investment that will leverage the already robust UAS military and civil infrastructure that will grow jobs in the state and assist the military in solving the complex problem of flying drones while also complying with National Airspace requirements.

This investment will ultimately help North Dakota become a nationwide leader in using drones. It will also assist in all aspects of oil production and delivery and will help insure America is not dependent on foreign oil. Please know that Collins is standing with you to develop and build the VANTIS network, and is looking forward to a future for America that grows well beyond our current vision for a BVLOS network.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David J. Nieuwsma".

David

cc: Honorable Lt. Governor Brent Sanford