

January 25, 2021

Senate Appropriations Committee
Chairman Ray Holmberg
621 High Plains Court
Grand Forks, ND 58201
rholmberg@nd.gov

From: Kenley Nebeker, Regional Director for Technical Programs and Training, Williston State College

Subject: Recommendation to Amend Commerce Budget

To the Honorable Chairman Holmberg and Committee,

As the Director of TrainND Northwest it is my privilege to share our vision for our developing unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) program and express my support for appropriated funding through an amendment to the Commerce Budget. While TrainND Northwest's UAS program is new and developing, we see great potential in the training that we could potentially provide to the state.

To take full advantage of the impressive investment the state is making in the Vantis BVLOS (Beyond Visual Line of Site) network workforce training will be key. The applications of UAS for the industries of ND are near endless. The addition of the Vantis BVLOS network creates an opportunity for industry to gain efficiencies in multiple ways. To take advantage of this opportunity industry, communities, and the youth of North Dakota will need to be educated as to what those possibilities are and trained on how to safely and efficiently operate UAS. TrainND Northwest's vision is to provide this training and education to the people of North Dakota. A seamless workforce training program in UAS will allow the state to reap the full benefit of its investment in Vantis.

This appropriation would allow TrainND Northwest to develop and provide a rounded UAS training curriculum outlined below:

- UAS Careers exploration/community education
- Part 107 certification preparation (federal commercial license to operate an UAS)
- UAS Safety
- Hands on Flight training Crawl-Walk-Run approach
 - Simulation
 - Group 1 UAS (small)
 - Group 2 UAS (medium)
 - Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) UAS
- BVLOS
 - Visual observer (visually observes flight of drone at checkpoints during mission)
 - Sensor operator (ensures BVLOS network is operating for UAS during mission)
 - Pilot & command (operators of UAS controls and legally responsible for operation of UAS)
 - Mission commander (oversees UAS mission and planning)
- Industry specific use training
 - Oil and Gas
 - Agriculture
 - Utilities and Wind Energy
 - Public/emergency services
 - Cinematography
 - Construction



To make this vision a reality we are asking for a one-time appropriation of \$2 million requiring, and contingent on receiving, a 1:1 match (available from any-and-all sources including O & G, Ag, Utilities, city, county, and WSC). Appropriations will be leveraged to continue building a UAS training program that meets the stated vision utilizing the draft budget seen below:

- 1.75 million UAS and sensors
- .75 million UAS curriculum development/administration
- .25 million UAS simulators
- .75 million UAS operations equipment
- .25 million UAS ground stations
- .25 million in- and out-of-state marketing

TrainND Northwest is confident that this appropriated funding will allow us to develop a UAS training program that will provide the state with a well trained UAS workforce that is ready to make use of the Vantis network allowing us to increase efficiencies and wealth for industry and the great citizens of North Dakota.

I propose this amendment to be located within the commerce budget due to the connection with UAS. I defer to the appropriation committee as to the location of the amendment as there are also connections to higher education and CTE with this request.

Please feel free to reach out to me at kenley.nebeker@willistonstate.edu with any questions.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kenley Nebeker".

Kenley Nebeker
Regional Director for Technical Programs and Training
Williston State College