KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Public Safety & Large Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Training

Problem/Issue Statement

Across the nation there are many examples on the benefits of using UAS as a tool for public safety operations; unfortunately, many law enforcement, firefighters, and public safety officials have limited budgets to access the appropriate training needed to deploy UAS in their operations. Additionally, the need for licensed commercial UAS pilots and sensor operators will increase as the FAA issues airworthiness certificates for larger UAS and advanced commercial operations. Increase in approvals for flight beyond visual line of site (BVLOS) operations create a demand for trained, commercial UAS pilots and sensor operators. According to the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) Analysis of Advanced Operations Part 107 Waiver Report, 53 waivers have been issued to enable BVLOS flights and the number continues to grow exponentially. These types of advanced UAS operations also will help support public safety and disaster response operations.

Request Description

Through non-credit short courses, Kansas State University's Aerospace and Technology Campus is helping public safety agencies incorporate UAS into their operations. We have trained over 650 law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency management officials and we need to expand our program to meet the needs of incorporating UAS for public safety. We have received a grant from the National Institute of Justice to evaluate UAS remote sensing technology for crime scene reconstruction, additional funding is needed to support training for public safety officials. Funding for $3M in training support would expand on our already established program and would provide scholarships to reduce training cost for public safety officials to incorporate use of the technology for operations such as crime scene reconstruction, search and rescue, and HAZMAT response training. Also, funding support would provide access to training on current UAS equipment including large unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAV). Larger UAS are ideal for commercial aerial tasks as they can carry multiple sensors and cameras, fly extended hours, and perform multiple inspections in a single flight.

Request Goals and Expected Outcomes

Kansas State University's Aerospace and Technology Campus offers a nationally ranked degree program in Unmanned Aircraft Systems and leads higher education in sponsored research related to the integration of the platform into the national airspace. However, as a state, Kansas currently ranks 33rd in terms of support for UAS development. We encourage swift action and investment in the research and education of large UAS, eVTOL, commercial space, and other disruptive technologies that will transform the national airspace over the next decade. Statewide investments and initiatives in states such as North Dakota and Oklahoma are impacting the ability to land federal contracts and sponsored projects.

Appropriations Subcommittee

Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Request Type

Funding Request ☒

Bill Language Request ☐