

## ALERTS

### Aviation Law Alert - FAA Grants Five More Commercial UAV Exemptions

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The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) continued on the path to unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) integration into the nation's airspace by granting commercial UAV exemptions to four more companies today (one company received two exemptions). These companies represent several different industries and plan to use UAVs for tasks such as aerial surveying, construction site monitoring, and oil rig flare stack inspections. This news follows UAV exemptions granted in September to several film and video production companies.

A recent study estimates that worldwide spending in the UAV industry will reach up to \$11.5 billion annually in the next decade. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx stated: "Unmanned aircraft offer a tremendous opportunity to spur innovation and economic activity by enabling many businesses to develop better products and services for their customers and the American public." It is the goal of the FAA to "foster commercial uses of this exciting technology while taking a responsible approach to the safety of America's airspace."

The top priority in integration planning is the safety of the nation's skies. The companies that were granted exemptions today will be using UAVs weighing less than 55 pounds and have agreed to operate the UAVs within line of sight. The FAA will also be mandating flight rules, and require operators to make timely reports of any accidents or incidents that occur.

The FAA has received 167 requests for exemptions from commercial entities to date. This news provides renewed hope for the many commercial entities on this waiting list, and those that are waiting for comprehensive regulations to be issued. The FAA is expected to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking by the end of the year, and have regulations in place for line-of-sight UAV operation by September 2015.

For more information, contact the Barnes & Thornburg attorney with whom you work, or Connie Lahn at [Connie.Lahn@btlaw.com](mailto:Connie.Lahn@btlaw.com) or (612) 367- 8706; or Clifford Maine at [Clifford.Maine@btlaw.com](mailto:Clifford.Maine@btlaw.com) or (616) 742-3944.

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