

Motion Picture Association of America
Statement for the Record in the House Committee on Judiciary Hearing
“Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: Commercial Applications and Public Policy Implications”

September 10, 2015

The Motion Picture Association of America is excited to be on the forefront of small unmanned aircraft system innovation. The MPAA has worked closely with the Federal Aviation Administration and sUAS operators to secure cinematography as among the first approved commercial applications of unmanned aircraft in the United States. Incorporating sUAS in domestic film and television production is not only safely advancing aerial photography and helping tell stories in new and exciting ways. It is also starting to generate the economic benefits that the technology can bring our country by reducing costs and keeping film productions here at home rather than sending these jobs overseas.

As the voice of the motion picture, home video and television industries, the MPAA submits this statement on behalf of its members: Paramount Pictures Corp., Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc., Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., Universal City Studios LLC, Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The film and television industry is currently employing sUAS under exemptions the FAA granted vendors to use the aircraft in scripted, closed-set filming. The controlled nature of our sUAS use greatly limits exposure to the general public, minimizing any safety or privacy concerns.

When the first handful of sUAS operators received exemption approval from the FAA last year at this time, Senator Dodd, MPAA’s Chairman and CEO, called the announcement “a victory for audiences everywhere as it gives filmmakers yet another way to push creative boundaries and create the kinds of scenes and shots we could only imagine a few years ago.” The MPAA and its members look forward to the continued development of this budding sector of the film industry as we work with the FAA to establish formal rules allowing the continued use of sUAS in domestic movie and television production.

Filming with sUAS is already authorized abroad and we have now built a positive safety track record here at home, having completed a growing number of successful flights. One of the small businesses we work with that received an exemption from the FAA in September 2014, has already completed more than 60 film projects to date totaling more than 1,200 successful flights. Advancing such domestic use will help keep production revenues from leaving our shores, promote jobs, expand the U.S. aviation industry, and provide real-world experiences in controlled environments to help pave the way for other uses of sUAS.

Looking ahead, we asked the FAA earlier this year in the formal rulemaking proceeding to allow additional flexibility, such as night flying, for filming in controlled environments as technology advances. We are in the initial stages of sUAS cinematography in the United States and, as use grows, the capabilities of the systems will likely evolve rapidly and beyond what we can predict now.

We thank Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Collins and the other members of the Committee for their attention to this matter. We are excited to continue our work to further integrate the use

of sUAS into domestic film and television productions, and are eager to see how the creative minds of our industry use the technology to the benefit of audiences around the world.