

OPENING STATEMENT AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY



**Opening Statement of Chairman Cresent Hardy (R-NV)
Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight and Regulations
Hearing: “Opportunity Rising: the FAA’s New Regulatory Framework
for Commercial Drone Operations ”
AS PREAPRED FOR DELIVERY
September 27, 2016**

Good morning. I call this hearing to order. We are bearing witness to the next great aviation renaissance. Advances in technology have cleared the way for a reality that, only a short time ago, was merely a dream. From the delivery of goods to the surveying of land, unmanned aircraft systems, otherwise known as UAS or drones, are poised to change how we do business. And with an initial report indicating that an overwhelming majority of companies operating UAS for commercial purposes have 10 employees or less, this industry will truly be a small business industry.

Our airspace, however, is not alone in experiencing a shifting environment. The office charged with overseeing our civil aviation industry, the Federal Aviation Administration, is racing to keep pace with the progress being made, on the ground and in the air, by small businesses across the country. As the FAA moves forward in its effort to fully integrate UAS into the national airspace system, the safety of those in the air and on the ground and the privacy concerns that many citizens hold dear must be balanced with the needs of the industry. This balance must be achieved for economic possibilities and efficiencies to become a reality.

In my home state, Nevada, which is one of six FAA selected UAS test sites, businesses are taking steps to innovate and test their ideas for commercial application. However, and I saw this in my district, a lack of guidance from the FAA regarding our skies was prohibiting companies from taking much needed next steps.

To address some of the uncertainty and provide a framework for future use, the FAA took a major step forward by finalizing the rule for civil operations of small UAS this summer. Located within Section 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the new rule created Part 107 and includes requirements and some flexibilities for operators of small unmanned aircrafts, those that weigh less than 55 pounds.

Today, the Subcommittee will hear from industry participants on how the rules are impacting their businesses and their future plans now that we are approximately a month into the implementation of Part 107. I am looking forward to hearing if the new rule is allowing small businesses in the unmanned aircraft industry to make the important strides needed for this sector to continue growing and innovating at a rapid pace.

I appreciate all of the witnesses for being here today. I look forward to your testimony. I now yield to Ranking Member Adams for her opening remarks.