

### FAA Begins to Grant Exemptions that Permit Commercial Drone Operations

On September 25, 2014, the Federal Aviation Administration granted exemptions to six aerial photo and video production companies for the commercial use of small unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) in the film industry. This action is a significant milestone for commercial UAS operations because the FAA had essentially grounded commercial UAS until it issues regulations that integrate them into the National Airspace System, which could take another three years. Potential commercial UAS operators in other industries, such as utilities, chemical manufacturers, agriculture companies, stack inspectors and universities now have a clear path to realizing the benefits of UAS.

These exemptions are the first that the FAA has granted under Section 333 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, which authorizes the FAA to waive the statutory airworthiness certification requirement for commercial UAS. To obtain a Section 333 exemption, a person must demonstrate that its UAS will not create a hazard to the National Airspace System or the public, or pose a threat to national security. Once granted a Section 333 exemption, a person must receive a Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) for the specific UAS operations. Persons applying for Section 333 exemptions and COAs should expect the FAA to impose reasonable restrictions on their UAS operations, such as pilot certification and recency of experience minimums, altitude and line-of-sight limitations, and limitations on proximity to airports and densely populated areas. Also, applicants will need to request waivers of regulations that were originally intended for manned aircraft operations, such as seatbelt and aircraft marking requirements.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, or to discuss what should be included in a Section 333 petition, please contact:

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