



May 2, 2016

Docket Operations M-30
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Room W12-140
West Building Ground Floor
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Docket Number FAA-2015-8680, Petition for Exemption; Summary of Petition Received; Walt Disney Parks and Resorts U.S., Inc.

The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) is the world leader in recreational aviation. With an international membership of more than 190,000 people in over 100 nations, EAA brings together pilots, aircraft builders, owners, and aviation enthusiasts who are dedicated to sharing the Spirit of Aviation by promoting the continued growth of aviation, the preservation of its history and a commitment to its future.

EAA is commenting on the petition for exemption by Walt Disney Parks and Resorts U.S., Inc. contained in Federal Docket FAA-2015-8680 and published in the Federal Register as number 2015-08311. The petitioner seeks relief from the applicable regulations to fly up to fifty small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) at once within Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) established over the petitioner's property. The petitioner also seeks relief from the requirement that the operator of the sUAS be an FAA certificated airman with valid medical certificate.

Though EAA recognizes the potential for innovation as a result of the proliferation of sUAS, EAA strongly believes the current commercial sUAS Section 333 exemption process and yet unreleased part 107 regulatory framework surrounding their commercial operation are minimum steps in ensuring they are safely used. These requirements are a result of methodical efforts on the part of the Department of Transportation (DOT), FAA, and stakeholders in the aviation and sUAS industries to ensure sUAS innovation can thrive while safety concerns are properly addressed.

Other than the commercial opportunities presented to the petitioner by the exemption, EAA sees no justification in allowing an operator to possess an exemption from current regulations without the equivalent level of safety established in the current Section 333 exemption process. Despite the safety mitigations described in the petition, new business opportunities do not provide adequate basis for an exemption from established safety standards carefully designed to protect the public.

EAA is also concerned over the precedent that such an exemption would set regarding regular flight within TFRs for commercial purposes. Permanent in nature, the TFRs over the petitioner's property are a result of a mandate passed by Congress in 2003 that was meant to address terrorism concerns after the attacks on September 11, 2001. The nature of these TFRs allow no aeronautical activity within their boundaries, including commercial and recreational sUAS operations, to ensure a safe and secure environment for the guests attending the petitioner's theme parks.

While EAA continues to disagree with the basis of these Congressionally-mandated TFRs, as long as they are to remain in place, their full intent should be recognized and restrictions enforced. Granting the petitioner's exemption has the potential to create an environment in which TFRs over theme parks, stadiums, or other commercial property are used for the furtherance of a business. Such actions are abuses of FAA regulations regarding the installation of TFRs for safety and security purposes.

EAA recognizes that sUAS will play an increasingly influential role in commercial and recreational aviation, but also believes that the current regulatory framework designed to ensure public safety should not be compromised. Additionally, the FAA exemption process should not create opportunities for businesses to misuse regulations for commercial purposes. EAA appreciates the opportunity to comment on this petition and to express the concerns of the aviation community if such an exemption were granted.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Elliott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sean" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Elliott".

Sean Elliott
Vice President, Advocacy and Safety