

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2684

To provide for the operation of unmanned aircraft systems by owners and operators of critical infrastructure.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 15, 2016

Mr. INHOFE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To provide for the operation of unmanned aircraft systems by owners and operators of critical infrastructure.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “UAVs for Energy In-
5 frastructure Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. OPERATION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS BY**
7 **OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF CRITICAL IN-**
8 **FRASTRUCTURE.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of title III of the FAA
10 Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–

1 95; 49 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended by adding at the
 2 end the following:

3 **“SEC. 337. OPERATION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS**
 4 **BY OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF CRITICAL**
 5 **INFRASTRUCTURE.**

6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
 7 date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of
 8 Transportation shall establish a process pursuant to which
 9 a covered person may operate an unmanned aircraft sys-
 10 tem to conduct activities described in subsection (b)—

11 “(1) beyond the visual line of sight of the indi-
 12 vidual operating the unmanned aircraft system; and

13 “(2) without any restriction on the time of the
 14 operation.

15 “(b) ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—The activities de-
 16 scribed in this subsection that a covered person may use
 17 an unmanned aircraft system to conduct are the following:

18 “(1) Activities for which compliance with cur-
 19 rent law can be accomplished by the use of manned
 20 aircraft, including—

21 “(A) conducting activities to ensure com-
 22 pliance with Federal or State regulatory, per-
 23 mit, or other requirements, including to conduct
 24 surveys associated with applications for permits

1 for new pipeline construction or maintenance or
 2 rehabilitation of existing pipelines; and

3 “(B) conducting activities relating to en-
 4 suring compliance with the requirements of part
 5 192 or 195 of title 49, Code of Federal Regula-
 6 tions.

7 “(2) Activities to inspect, repair, or respond to
 8 critical infrastructure, including to respond to a
 9 pipeline incident, or in response to or preparation
 10 for a natural disaster, man-made disaster, severe
 11 weather event, or other incident beyond the control
 12 of the covered person that may cause material dam-
 13 age to such infrastructure.

14 “(3) Activities not described in paragraph (1)
 15 or (2) if the covered person notifies the local Flight
 16 Standards District Office before the operation of the
 17 unmanned aircraft system.

18 “(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

19 “(1) COVERED PERSON.—The term ‘covered
 20 person’ means a person that—

21 “(A) owns or operates a pipeline or other
 22 critical infrastructure;

23 “(B) is an agent of a person described in
 24 subparagraph (A); or

25 “(C) is the sponsor of a pipeline project.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 336 the following:

“Sec. 337. Operation of unmanned aircraft systems by owners and operators of critical infrastructure.”.