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January 23, 2012

The Honorable John Mica
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As Congress works to extend air transportation authorities and programs, I am writing to express my support for swift action on the long-term Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization measure, H.R. 658. This bipartisan, fiscally responsible measure contains important provisions on air traffic control modernization, safety improvements, and job creation through technology and research.

The long-term reauthorization will improve not only our passenger and civilian aviation systems, but also our critical national security research systems. The United States cannot afford to further delay implementation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) testing at the expense of American jobs while developments in aerospace technologies continue elsewhere around the globe.

In working with you, Rep. Richard Hanna, and Rep. Rick Berg, language which I co-authored was included in the House-passed version of H.R. 658 which requires the FAA to establish a program for UAS test ranges. I appreciate your commitment to these aerospace research opportunities, and your support of the test range provisions in the final, long-term measure. This Congress further emphasized the importance of UAS testing in the FY12 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Similarly, the FY12 NDAA included language requiring the FAA to work with the Department of Defense and the Air Force to integrate UAS test ranges into the national airspace system. Together, these bills will help ensure that the United States remains at the forefront of aerospace development.

I look forward to continuing our work together in developing these UAS research opportunities with prompt consideration of the final long-term reauthorization measure. Thank you for your dedicated service as Chairman, and your continued leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael R. Turner".

Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress