



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

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October 6, 2025

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

Subject: *Docket ID: FAA-2025-1908 - Comments on Normalizing
Unmanned Aircraft Systems Beyond Visual Line of Sight
Operations*

Dear Sir/Madam:

The City of Newport Beach (City) provides the following public comment letter in response to the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) proposed Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) rule for drone operators. The City appreciates the FAA's solicitation for public input on this important subject.

Given Newport Beach's adjacency to Orange County's John Wayne Airport (SNA or the Airport) whose commercial and general aviation jet operations depart directly over a large portion of our community, Newport Bay, and the 500-acre Upper Newport Bay Ecological Preserve, the City has shared its comments and concerns to the FAA on a number of matters, most recently those related to the *Proposed eVTOL Integration and Environmental Review Process* (Docket ID: FAA-2025-1571).

The City understands the potential benefits that the integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) could bring, but implores the FAA to continue to place the highest priority on safety as it undertakes BVLOS rulemaking and to ensure the public is engaged and informed about these still emerging technologies.

Addressing Safety Concerns in BVLOS Operations

Given Newport Beach's urban location, an increase in low-altitude flight operations could pose risks to residents, infrastructure and emergency response efforts without effective airspace management and operational regulations that can be implemented and enforced.

The FAA should ensure that its BVLOS rule incorporates robust safety measures, including mandatory collision-avoidance systems, clear operational guidelines, adequately resourced traffic management, and coordination with local emergency services.

Environmental and Noise Impacts of Increased Drone Operations

The proliferation of drones could have significant environmental and noise impacts on Newport Beach and other communities. The potential volume of daily events, and the unique sound generated by drones, are distinct from those of traditional aircraft and necessitate a change in the way the FAA and communities have historically evaluated the impacts of aviation operations. The FAA should develop methodology that reflects the unique characteristics of UAS and require environmental review that evaluates the unique sound and frequency of UAS operations.

Local Government Authority and Community Engagement

The FAA's BVLOS rule should respect the authority of local governments to regulate drone operations within their jurisdictions. Local governments have a vested interest in addressing community-specific concerns, such as privacy, routing, noise and public safety. The FAA should establish a framework for collaboration with local governments, ensuring that their input is considered in the rulemaking process and that they retain the ability to impose additional restrictions tailored to local needs.

Further, the City strongly emphasizes the importance of informing and engaging potentially impacted communities early and openly in any planning process. Allowing the public a voice in the process can help develop trust and could help build public understanding and acceptance of UAS.

The City appreciates the opportunity to provide input, and we look forward to collaborating with the FAA on this important topic in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Kleiman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lauren Kleiman
Mayor Pro Tem

Cc: Newport Beach City Council