



**OPENING STATEMENT OF MICHAEL TOSCANO
PRESIDENT & CEO
ASSOCIATION FOR UNMANNED VEHICLE SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL (AUVSI)**

**Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing
"The Future of Drones in America: Law Enforcement and Privacy Considerations"
March 20, 2013**

Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley, I want to thank you and the rest of the Members of the Judiciary Committee for inviting me to testify here today.

My organization, the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International – or AUVSI – is the world's largest non-profit organization devoted exclusively to advancing the unmanned systems and robotics community. We have more than 7,500 members, including more than 6,300 members in the United States. The industry is at the forefront of a technology that will not only benefit society, but the U.S. economy, as well. Earlier this month, my organization released a study, which found the unmanned aircraft industry is poised to help create 70,000 new jobs and \$13.6 billion in economic impact in the first three years following the integration of unmanned aircraft into the national airspace.

However, the industry fully understands the technology is new to many Americans, and their opinions are being formed by what they see in the news. Today's hearing is an excellent opportunity to address some misconceptions about the technology and discuss how it will actually be used domestically.

You have probably noticed that I do not use the term "drone." The industry refers to the technology as unmanned aircraft systems, or UAS, because they are more than just a pilotless vehicle. A UAS also includes the technology on the ground, with a human at the controls. As I like to say, there is nothing unmanned about an unmanned system.

The term “drone” also carries with it a hostile connotation and does not reflect how UAS are actually being used domestically. UAS are used to perform dangerous and difficult tasks safely and efficiently. They were used to assess the flooding of the Red River in the upper Midwest. They were used to help battle California wildfires. And they are being used to study everything from hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, tornadoes in the Great Plains, and volcanoes in Hawaii.

Unlike military UAS, the systems most likely be used by public safety agencies are small systems, many weighing less than 5 pounds, with limited flight duration. As for weaponization, it is a non-starter. The FAA prohibits deploying weapons on civil aircraft. And for the record: AUVSI does not support the weaponization of civil UAS.

I also want to correct the misperception there is no regulation of domestic UAS. The FAA strictly regulates who, where, when, and why unmanned aircraft may be flown. If public entities want to fly UAS, they must obtain a Certificate of Authorization or COA from the FAA. UAS are generally flown within line of sight of the operator, lower than 400 feet, and during daylight hours. It is also currently a violation of FAA regulations to fly a UAS for commercial purposes.

As we focus on the use of UAS by law enforcement, it is important to recognize the robust legal framework already in place, rooted in the Fourth Amendment to our Constitution and decades of case law, which regulates how law enforcement uses any technology – whether it is unmanned aircraft, manned aircraft, thermal imaging, GPS, or cell phones.

Safeguarding people’s privacy is important to my industry, as well. Last year, AUVSI published a Code of Conduct explicitly directing users to respect individual privacy. AUVSI also endorsed guidelines published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police for the use of unmanned aircraft by law enforcement. These guidelines were not only praised by our industry, but the ACLU as well. AUVSI strongly opposes any misuse of UAS technology. Just like with any technology, those who abuse it should be held accountable.

In conclusion, AUVSI believes all stakeholders can work together to advance this technology in a thoughtful way that recognizes the benefits and fuels job creation, while protecting Americans’ safety, as well as their rights. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.