



ONEIDA COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR.
County Executive
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May 15, 2018

Secretary Elaine L. Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

I am writing to express my complete disappointment that the proposal from New York State, Oneida County, Amazon and other partners for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration Pilot Program was denied. Since our application was strong, I'm left to believe this decision must have been unduly tainted by politics instead of being based on merit. I must agree with Congressman John Katko when he calls this decision "confounding."

Since 2013, Griffiss International Airport, owned and operated by the County of Oneida, has been one of seven national test sites integrating Unmanned Air Systems into our nation's airspace. Our partnership with the NUAIR Alliance has already made the FAA test site the most technologically-advanced site in the nation. Our combination of capabilities and investment from our partners including New York State, Griffiss International Airport and NUAIR clearly puts this site on the forefront of UAS integration and testing.

The outstanding work we have put forth at our test site has already been highly-recognized and many more advancements are being made as we speak. Our range instrumentation is without parallel and we have conducted and continue to carry out task orders for NASA. The 50-mile designated UTM corridor being developed between Rome and Syracuse, New York is not being duplicated anywhere in the country. That, with all these advantages, and more than five years of successful testing already under our belts, we were not chosen for the UAS Integration Pilot Program, is mystifying.

This should have been an easy decision. While our test site will continue to be a leader in the UAS industry regardless of this egregious decision, I once again must reiterate my disappointment in the clear appearance that politics, not merit, drove this decision.

I would like the opportunity to hear the reasons we were not selected and discover how we can remedy this immediately.

I am available to discuss this project at any time at 315-798-5800.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Picente Jr.
Oneida County Executive

CC: The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
CC: The Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand
CC: The Honorable Claudia Tenney

CC: The Honorable John Katko
CC: The Honorable Elise Stefanik