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**Heller, Warner, Hoeven, Cortez Masto Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Advance Development of Unmanned Aircraft Systems**

**Washington, D.C** – Today, U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV), Mark R. Warner (D-VA), John Hoeven (R-ND), and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) introduced bipartisan legislation designed to advance the development of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and build on the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) efforts to safely integrate them into the National Airspace System. The Safe DRONE Act of 2017 will ensure that the United States keeps pace in the development and implementation of unmanned technology.

Last year, a federal court struck down additional requirements instituted by FAA that set in place a streamlined and user-friendly web-based aircraft registration process for owners of recreational unmanned aircraft. The courts found that FAA lacked the authority to regulate this technology. This legislation provides Congressional authority for FAA to continue the registration and marking of small UAS and promote their safe and responsible use.

“With Nevada leading the nation in unmanned aircraft system technology and home to one of several UAS test sites, it’s important that federal policy keeps pace with innovation to ensure that Nevada remains at the forefront of cutting-edge technologies,” **said Heller.** “The Safe DRONE Act is a bipartisan effort that will advance the UAS industry so that our country and the Silver State can continue to reap their economic benefits, and I’m proud to support it.”

“Not since the nascent days of the cell phone industry have I seen technology with as much transformative potential as unmanned systems,” **said Warner.** “As the UAS industry continues to develop at a rapid pace, we need to ensure the U.S. is well positioned to keep pace with the technology so this development doesn’t just go overseas. The Safe DRONE Act takes important steps forward to safely integrate this technology into commercial use and further harness its potential.”

“The UAS industry needs legal and regulatory certainty, both to realize the benefits of this technology and to ensure its safe private and commercial use,” **said Hoeven.** “Our bipartisan bill supports the integration of UAS into the national airspace and helps continue our nation’s leadership in this emerging industry, particularly through the extension of research at the FAA’s national test sites, the development of an unmanned traffic management system and the creation of a UAS training initiative at community colleges.”

“For years, the state of Nevada has been leading in drone innovation, presenting our state with opportunities to seek new ways to innovate and grow our economy,” **said Senator Cortez Masto.** “This new legislation will allow us to harness the economic benefits of unmanned aircraft systems, and its potential to improve our way of life. By training a skilled workforce, enhancing the safety and security of drones, and providing essential funding for research development, Nevada can diversify its economy and continue to be at the forefront of this revolutionary technology in a safe and secure manner.”

Among its provisions, the Safe DRONE Act includes language to help build a trained and professional workforce in the UAS industry, advances work on the development of a low-altitude safe and secure traffic management system, and directs robust collaboration to address critical needs such as a comprehensive security policy and a long-term plan for spectrum and communications infrastructure needs.

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