



April 2, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The Commercial Drone Alliance (“CDA”)¹ strongly supports the nomination of Dr. Ethan Klein as the United States Chief Technology Officer (CTO). Dr. Klein has deep experience with critical and emerging technologies and understands the challenges faced by the commercial unmanned aircraft system (UAS, or drone) industry as we seek to scale operations. We urge the Committee to swiftly advance Dr. Klein’s nomination at this critical time for advanced aviation technologies in the United States.

Every day, the commercial drone industry provides significant economic and societal benefits to millions of Americans. Commercial drone operations span myriad industries, from logistics and healthcare to critical infrastructure and agriculture, generating millions of dollars in revenue and creating thousands of American jobs. Industry growth is happening at an unprecedented rate, with some estimates projecting the global drone industry will contribute billions to the global economy over the next several years.² Congress has repeatedly emphasized the tremendous potential of expanded UAS operations to enhance commercial and public safety use, spur economic growth, and improve emergency response. Furthermore, maturation of the domestic drone industrial base is critically important to our current and future economic and national security interests. With the right executive branch leadership and support,

¹ The CDA is an independent non-profit organization led by key leaders in the commercial drone industry. The CDA has actively participated in rulemakings and policy efforts to facilitate the safe and secure development and expansion of commercial drone operations. The CDA works with all levels of government to collaborate on policies for industry growth and seeks to educate the public on the safe and responsible use of commercial drones to achieve economic benefits and humanitarian gains. We bring together commercial drone end-users, manufacturers, service providers, advanced air mobility companies, drone security companies, and vertical markets including oil and gas, precision agriculture, construction, security, communications technology, infrastructure, newsgathering, filmmaking, and more. Learn more at <https://www.commercialdronealliance.org/>.

² Levitate Capital, *The Future of the Drone Economy: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Economic Potential, Market Opportunities, and Strategic Considerations in the Drone Economy 1* (Dec. 2020), <https://levitatecap.com/levitate/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Levitate-Capital-White-Paper.pdf>.

the UAS industry can play a critical role in re-establishing American leadership in global aviation and automation technologies.

Dr. Klein's nomination presents a promising opportunity for the commercial drone industry. During President Trump's first term, Dr. Klein was a strong advocate for emerging and critical technologies in his role as a policy advisor with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Dr. Klein has a keen understanding of emerging technologies and understands the importance of scaling these technologies to harness their societal, economic, and national security benefits. His expertise across a variety of subject areas—including nuclear engineering, defense innovation, and technology policy—will be a critical asset to developing actionable, common-sense policy solutions that unlock the potential of emerging technologies, including large-scale drone operations. Dr. Klein's leadership promises to propel the commercial drone industry forward, ensuring it remains a pivotal component of the nation's technological landscape.

This coming year is critically important to the long-term development of the domestic commercial drone industry. The CTO is a key voice within the White House for advancing domestic technology initiatives. Michael Kratsios, CTO during President Trump's first term, played an instrumental role in expanding UAS operations and safely integrating drones into the National Airspace System (NAS). Dr. Klein is well-suited to continue this essential work and support efforts to update outdated regulations which prevent drone operations from scaling to their potential. Under your leadership, this Committee recognized the importance of updating these regulations and established appropriate timelines in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, all of which have passed with no action.³ We expect Dr. Klein to leverage his position as CTO to swiftly advance these critical updates and ensure agencies are fulfilling their Congressional mandates.

The position of CTO has sat unfilled since President Trump's first term. This is unacceptable at a time when American leadership in emerging and critical technologies hangs in the balance. Dr. Klein understands that drone technology requires a regulatory regime that complements—not constrains—safe, scalable operations for the benefit of the American public. After the Committee completes its work, we ask the Senate to swiftly confirm Dr. Klein to this important role. We look forward to working with him and his team to unlock the potential of commercial drone operations and re-establishing America's leadership into the next century of flight.

Sincerely,



Lisa Ellman
Chief Executive Officer
Commercial Drone Alliance

³ FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, Pub. L. No. 118-63, §§ 929, 930, 138 Stat. 1025, 1365–66 (2024).