



March 2, 2018

The Honorable Robert L. Sumwalt
Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20594

Re: Recent incidents involving manned aircraft and drones

Dear Chairman Sumwalt and the NTSB Board:

In light of recent incidents involving drones, the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) would like to offer our expertise and resources to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to assist in the investigation of any potential manned and unmanned aircraft incidents.

AMA is the world's largest association of model aircraft hobbyists, representing nearly 200,000 members across the United States. We have successfully managed our community of responsible enthusiasts for more than eighty years. Our members are skilled aviators who intimately understand the capabilities and flight characteristics of unmanned aircraft, and many of our members build their own model airplanes.

Recent incidents, for example in Charleston, South Carolina, concern us greatly, as the safety of the airspace is of the utmost importance. AMA members have harmoniously and safely shared the airspace with manned aircraft for more than eight decades – long before the advent of drones. In fact, our organization was founded and our members were flying more than two decades before the Federal Aviation Administration was established in 1958.

The recent potential incidents involving manned aircraft and recreational drones raise important questions that must be answered so we can truly understand what happened. There's a great deal of media sensationalism surrounding these incidents, but what we really need are facts. If warranted, we also greatly need tougher enforcement against careless and reckless recreational drone operators.

In addition to offering our expertise, AMA urges the NTSB to recommend tough and severe penalties for any drone operator endangering the safety of other aircraft and/or people on the ground. Tougher enforcement, including civil and criminal penalties, and possibly jail time, will serve as a deterrent to others who flaunt existing drone laws.



We want manned and unmanned aircraft to operate safely in the airspace together at all times. We also want to get to the bottom of these recent incidents involving manned aircraft and drones. AMA is ready to assist the NTSB in any way we can with its current or future investigations.

Meanwhile, we will also continue our work alongside the manned and unmanned aviation communities to ensure that more people understand the drone laws – and follow them. We believe increased education is by far the most effective way to keep our skies safe for all.

We hope you will accept our offer to assist in investigations regarding any potential manned aircraft and recreational drone incidents, and look forward to working together in the future.

Sincerely,

Rich Hanson
President of the Academy of Model Aeronautics