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**SENATORS WIDENER, BEAGLE, JONES, AND LEHNER
INTRODUCE RESOLUTION TO BOLSTER OHIO'S UAS
INDUSTRY**

LEGISLATION CALLS FOR TESTING SITE DESIGNATION FOR UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS

COLUMBUS – State Senators Chris Widener (R-Springfield), Bill Beagle (R-Tipp City), Shannon Jones (R-Springboro), and Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) today announced the introduction of legislation calling upon the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to select Ohio as a site for testing Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS).

Southwest Ohio has long been a forerunner in aerospace research and the legislators believe that there is an extraordinary opportunity for expanding UAS testing and development in the region.

“Ohio’s UAS industry is poised for rapid growth, with the potential for thousands of jobs to be created,” said Senator Widener. “These are the high-skilled, high-tech jobs that our state needs to compete in the 21st century economy.”

Ohio currently boasts the Air Force Research Laboratory, headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, as a major center for UAS and advanced sensor research and development efforts. In addition Ohio already possesses the infrastructure and facilities necessary for UAS testing and development, including the Wilmington Air Park, Springfield Air National Guard Base, and the Brush Creek and Buckeye Military Operating Areas.

“With this designation, entrepreneurs in the UAS industry who are looking to open, relocate, or expand can do so with the confidence that their companies can grow and prosper in the Miami Valley,” Beagle said.

“Wright Patterson Air Force Base and other facilities throughout the region already provide a strong infrastructure in this area,” added Jones. “Without question, Ohio’s research and innovation community makes it a prime location for UAS testing.”

The United States Congress is currently considering H.R. 658, a bill that would require the Administrator of the FAA to select testing sites for the development of UAS technology for integration into the National Airspace System. The resolution calls for Ohio to be named as one of the six potential sites authorized under the bill.

“Throughout this General Assembly, job creation has been paramount to our work in Columbus,” Lehner said. “Bringing the UAS industry into Ohio would make great use of our expertise, while also expanding our workforce.”

According to the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, more than 23,000 jobs could be created in the United States over the next 15 years as a result of the integration of UAS into the National Airspace System.