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COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

MARK BEGICH  
ALASKA

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEE ON  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS,  
ATMOSPHERE, FISHERIES AND COAST GUARD  
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March 16, 2012

The Honorable Bert Stedman  
Alaska Senator  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Stedman:

It was great to meet with you and the rest of the House and Senate leadership when I was in Juneau. I appreciated hearing your priorities and concerns, and I will continue to do all I can to promote Alaska projects and innovation—especially those that have potential to bolster the economy and create jobs statewide.

One topic we discussed was research and development (R&D) of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and how to position Alaska as a leader for UAS technology in the nation. I believe a demonstration of support from the Alaska Legislature will send a message that Alaska is serious about being a national leader and we are able to conduct cutting edge R&D here in Alaska.

As I mentioned, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is considering locations for establishing six UAS test facilities in the U.S. I have urged both acting FAA Administrator Michael Huerta and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood to name Alaska as one of those sites.

In Alaska, UAS are already being utilized in many ways, including low-altitude ice observations, marine surveys, and wildfire monitoring. Further, as development in the Arctic progresses, UAS will become an even more vital resource.

Again, as you work on this year's capital budget, I encourage the Legislature to dedicate state resources to University of Alaska for the UAS program. Investment now will help create jobs and have long-term positive effects on Alaska's economy.

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The Honorable Bert Stedman  
March 16, 2012  
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If you need further information or have any questions, please contact Schawna Thoma in my Anchorage office (907) 258-9303. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Begich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Begich" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Begich  
United States Senator