

# FAA Certification

ACCELERATING INNOVATION IN CIVIL AVIATION



## WHAT IS CERTIFICATION REFORM

In September 2018, Congress passed a five-year Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act that directed the agency to streamline the aircraft certification process. The FAA manages certification of civil aviation products through their Office of Aviation Safety. The certification process is set up to ensure that all aircraft and related products adhere to a set of minimum U.S. safety regulations and meet foreign countries' special import requirements. However, inefficiencies in the current process can lead to costly delays and undercut the ability of U.S. companies to compete in the global market.

The direction of Congress included driving changes to the certification activities within the FAA, facilitating the introduction of new safety innovations and technologies into the market, and demanding more aggressive engagement by the FAA in supporting validation of U.S. exports into foreign markets through bilateral agreements.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Currently, the FAA is too often locked into bureaucratic regulatory processes that can discourage innovation and the introduction of new safety-enhancing technologies. Additionally, these processes often rely on direct FAA involvement for approval of each project or product, which means that companies are competing for scarce FAA resources to bring their products to the market. To add to that, when a product is exported to a new country or imported from another country to the United States, the FAA must also support its validation with that country's aviation regulatory authority.

The FAA certification process ensures that aircraft and related products and services meet its set of minimum safety standards and regulatory requirements. The process supports the creation of bilateral certification agreements with other countries so that U.S.-manufactured aircraft can be more easily certified to those countries' standards and be exported. Similarly, the FAA also manages the certification validation of products designed and manufactured in other countries when they are imported to U.S. customers.

We are at an exciting time in the aerospace industry – commercial aviation, unmanned and autonomous systems, commercial space, and supersonic transportation are all growing at an unprecedented pace. Specifically, the aerospace industry is growing at a significantly higher rate than FAA resources, and without a change to the system the FAA will become the bottleneck to introducing new products and technologies into the airspace.

## WHAT'S NEXT

The FAA has already initiated a transformation within their Aircraft Certification and Flight Standards organizations to address some of these concerns. The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 further strengthens these initiatives and instructs the FAA to promote the U.S. aerospace industry throughout the world. The FAA should continue enacting these reforms to ensure the United States remains a leader in aviation and competitive in the global aviation marketplace. Congress should monitor and ensure that the FAA follows through with substantive, measurable certification process improvements.



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