



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

April 24, 2015

Exemption No. 11428
Regulatory Docket No. FAA-2015-0172

Mr. Eric Silberg
Eric Silberg Photography
7728 Ivymount Terrace
Potomac, MD 20854

Dear Mr. Silberg:

This letter is to inform you that we have granted your request for exemption. It transmits our decision, explains its basis, and gives you the conditions and limitations of the exemption, including the date it ends.

The Basis for Our Decision

By letter dated January 30, 2015, you petitioned the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on behalf of Eric Silberg Photography (hereinafter petitioner or operator) for an exemption. The exemption would allow the petitioner to operate an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) to conduct photography and videography.

See Appendix A for the petition submitted to the FAA describing the proposed operations and the regulations that the petitioner seeks an exemption.

The FAA has determined that good cause exists for not publishing a summary of the petition in the Federal Register because the requested exemption would not set a precedent, and any delay in acting on this petition would be detrimental to the petitioner.

Airworthiness Certification

The UAS proposed by the petitioner is a DJI Inspire 1.

The petitioner requested relief from 14 CFR part 21, *Certification procedures for products and parts, Subpart H—Airworthiness Certificates*. In accordance with the statutory criteria provided in Section 333 of Public Law 112–95 in reference to 49 U.S.C. § 44704, and in consideration of the size, weight, speed, and limited operating area associated with the aircraft and its operation, the Secretary of Transportation has determined that this aircraft meets the conditions of Section 333. Therefore, the FAA finds that the requested relief from 14 CFR part 21, *Certification procedures for products and parts, Subpart H—Airworthiness Certificates*, and any associated noise certification and testing requirements of part 36, is not necessary.

The Basis for Our Decision

You have requested to use a UAS for aerial data collection. The FAA has issued grants of exemption in circumstances similar in all material respects to those presented in your petition. In Grants of Exemption Nos. 11062 to Astraeus Aerial (*see* Docket No. FAA–2014–0352), 11109 to Clayco, Inc. (*see* Docket No. FAA–2014–0507), 11112 to VDOS Global, LLC (*see* Docket No. FAA–2014–0382), and 11213 to Aeryon Labs, Inc. (*see* Docket No. FAA–2014–0642), the FAA found that the enhanced safety achieved using an unmanned aircraft (UA) with the specifications described by the petitioner and carrying no passengers or crew, rather than a manned aircraft of significantly greater proportions, carrying crew in addition to flammable fuel, gives the FAA good cause to find that the UAS operation enabled by this exemption is in the public interest.

Having reviewed your reasons for requesting an exemption, I find that—

- They are similar in all material respects to relief previously requested in Grant of Exemption Nos. 11062, 11109, 11112, and 11213;
- The reasons stated by the FAA for granting Exemption Nos. 11062, 11109, 11112, and 11213 also apply to the situation you present; and
- A grant of exemption is in the public interest.

Our Decision

In consideration of the foregoing, I find that a grant of exemption is in the public interest. Therefore, pursuant to the authority contained in 49 U.S.C. 106(f), 40113, and 44701, delegated to me by the Administrator, Eric Silberg Photography is granted an exemption from 14 CFR §§ 61.23(a) and (c), 61.101(e)(4) and (5), 61.113(a), 61.315(a), 91.7(a), 91.119(c), 91.121, 91.151(a)(1), 91.405(a), 91.407(a)(1), 91.409(a)(1) and (2), and 91.417(a) and (b), to the extent necessary to allow the petitioner to operate a UAS to perform aerial data collection. This exemption is subject to the conditions and limitations listed below.

Conditions and Limitations

In this grant of exemption, Eric Silberg Photography is hereafter referred to as the operator.

Failure to comply with any of the conditions and limitations of this grant of exemption will be grounds for the immediate suspension or rescission of this exemption.

1. Operations authorized by this grant of exemption are limited to the DJI Inspire 1 UAS when weighing less than 55 pounds including payload. Proposed operations of any other aircraft will require a new petition or a petition to amend this exemption.
2. Operations for the purpose of closed-set motion picture and television filming are not permitted.
3. The UA may not be operated at a speed exceeding 87 knots (100 miles per hour). The exemption holder may use either groundspeed or calibrated airspeed to determine compliance with the 87 knot speed restriction. In no case will the UA be operated at airspeeds greater than the maximum UA operating airspeed recommended by the aircraft manufacturer.
4. The UA must be operated at an altitude of no more than 400 feet above ground level (AGL). Altitude must be reported in feet AGL.
5. The UA must be operated within visual line of sight (VLOS) of the PIC at all times. This requires the PIC to be able to use human vision unaided by any device other than corrective lenses, as specified on the PIC's FAA-issued airman medical certificate or U.S. driver's license.
6. All operations must utilize a visual observer (VO). The UA must be operated within the visual line of sight (VLOS) of the PIC and VO at all times. The VO may be used to satisfy the VLOS requirement as long as the PIC always maintains VLOS capability. The VO and PIC must be able to communicate verbally at all times; electronic messaging or texting is not permitted during flight operations. The PIC must be designated before the flight and cannot transfer his or her designation for the duration of the flight. The PIC must ensure that the VO can perform the duties required of the VO.
7. This exemption and all documents needed to operate the UAS and conduct its operations in accordance with the conditions and limitations stated in this grant of exemption, are hereinafter referred to as the operating documents. The operating documents must be accessible during UAS operations and made available to the Administrator upon request. If a discrepancy exists between the conditions and limitations in this exemption and the procedures outlined in the operating documents, the conditions and limitations herein take precedence and must be followed. Otherwise, the operator must follow the procedures as outlined in its operating documents. The operator may update or revise its operating documents. It is the operator's responsibility to track such revisions and present updated and revised

documents to the Administrator or any law enforcement official upon request. The operator must also present updated and revised documents if it petitions for extension or amendment to this grant of exemption. If the operator determines that any update or revision would affect the basis upon which the FAA granted this exemption, then the operator must petition for an amendment to its grant of exemption. The FAA's UAS Integration Office (AFS-80) may be contacted if questions arise regarding updates or revisions to the operating documents.

8. Any UAS that has undergone maintenance or alterations that affect the UAS operation or flight characteristics, e.g. replacement of a flight critical component, must undergo a functional test flight prior to conducting further operations under this exemption. Functional test flights may only be conducted by a PIC with a VO and must remain at least 500 feet from other people. The functional test flight must be conducted in such a manner so as to not pose an undue hazard to persons and property.
9. The operator is responsible for maintaining and inspecting the UAS to ensure that it is in a condition for safe operation.
10. Prior to each flight, the PIC must conduct a pre-flight inspection and determine the UAS is in a condition for safe flight. The pre-flight inspection must account for all potential discrepancies, e.g. inoperable components, items, or equipment. If the inspection reveals a condition that affects the safe operation of the UAS, the aircraft is prohibited from operating until the necessary maintenance has been performed and the UAS is found to be in a condition for safe flight.
11. The operator must follow the UAS manufacturer's maintenance, overhaul, replacement, inspection, and life limit requirements for the aircraft and aircraft components.
12. Each UAS operated under this exemption must comply with all manufacturer safety bulletins.
13. Under this grant of exemption, a PIC must hold either an airline transport, commercial, private, recreational, or sport pilot certificate. The PIC must also hold a current FAA airman medical certificate or a valid U.S. driver's license issued by a state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, a territory, a possession, or the Federal government. The PIC must also meet the flight review requirements specified in 14 CFR § 61.56 in an aircraft in which the PIC is rated on his or her pilot certificate.
14. The operator may not permit any PIC to operate unless the PIC demonstrates the ability to safely operate the UAS in a manner consistent with how the UAS will be operated under this exemption, including evasive and emergency maneuvers and maintaining appropriate distances from persons, vessels, vehicles and structures. PIC qualification flight hours and currency must be logged in a manner consistent with

14 CFR § 61.51(b). Flights for the purposes of training the operator's PICs and VOs (training, proficiency, and experience-building) and determining the PIC's ability to safely operate the UAS in a manner consistent with how the UAS will be operated under this exemption are permitted under the terms of this exemption. However, training operations may only be conducted during dedicated training sessions. During training, proficiency, and experience-building flights, all persons not essential for flight operations are considered nonparticipants, and the PIC must operate the UA with appropriate distance from nonparticipants in accordance with 14 CFR § 91.119.

15. UAS operations may not be conducted during night, as defined in 14 CFR § 1.1. All operations must be conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC). Flights under special visual flight rules (SVFR) are not authorized.
16. The UA may not operate within 5 nautical miles of an airport reference point (ARP) as denoted in the current FAA Airport/Facility Directory (AFD) or for airports not denoted with an ARP, the center of the airport symbol as denoted on the current FAA-published aeronautical chart, unless a letter of agreement with that airport's management is obtained or otherwise permitted by a COA issued to the exemption holder. The letter of agreement with the airport management must be made available to the Administrator or any law enforcement official upon request.
17. The UA may not be operated less than 500 feet below or less than 2,000 feet horizontally from a cloud or when visibility is less than 3 statute miles from the PIC.
18. If the UAS loses communications or loses its GPS signal, the UA must return to a pre-determined location within the private or controlled-access property.
19. The PIC must abort the flight in the event of unpredicted obstacles or emergencies.
20. The PIC is prohibited from beginning a flight unless (considering wind and forecast weather conditions) there is enough available power for the UA to conduct the intended operation and to operate after that for at least five minutes or with the reserve power recommended by the manufacturer if greater.
21. Air Traffic Organization (ATO) Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA). All operations shall be conducted in accordance with an ATO-issued COA. The exemption holder may apply for a new or amended COA if it intends to conduct operations that cannot be conducted under the terms of the attached COA.
22. All aircraft operated in accordance with this exemption must be identified by serial number, registered in accordance with 14 CFR part 47, and have identification (N-Number) markings in accordance with 14 CFR part 45, Subpart C. Markings must be as large as practicable.

23. Documents used by the operator to ensure the safe operation and flight of the UAS and any documents required under 14 CFR §§ 91.9 and 91.203 must be available to the PIC at the Ground Control Station of the UAS any time the aircraft is operating. These documents must be made available to the Administrator or any law enforcement official upon request.
24. The UA must remain clear and give way to all manned aviation operations and activities at all times.
25. The UAS may not be operated by the PIC from any moving device or vehicle.
26. All Flight operations must be conducted at least 500 feet from all nonparticipating persons, vessels, vehicles, and structures unless:
 - a. Barriers or structures are present that sufficiently protect nonparticipating persons from the UA and/or debris in the event of an accident. The operator must ensure that nonparticipating persons remain under such protection. If a situation arises where nonparticipating persons leave such protection and are within 500 feet of the UA, flight operations must cease immediately in a manner ensuring the safety of nonparticipating persons; and
 - b. The owner/controller of any vessels, vehicles or structures has granted permission for operating closer to those objects and the PIC has made a safety assessment of the risk of operating closer to those objects and determined that it does not present an undue hazard.

The PIC, VO, operator trainees or essential persons are not considered nonparticipating persons under this exemption.

27. All operations shall be conducted over private or controlled-access property with permission from the property owner/controller or authorized representative. Permission from property owner/controller or authorized representative will be obtained for each flight to be conducted.
28. Any incident, accident, or flight operation that transgresses the lateral or vertical boundaries of the operational area as defined by the applicable COA must be reported to the FAA's UAS Integration Office (AFS-80) within 24 hours. Accidents must be reported to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) per instructions contained on the NTSB Web site: www.nts.gov.

If this exemption permits operations for the purpose of closed-set motion picture and television filming and production, the following additional conditions and limitations apply.

29. The operator must have a motion picture and television operations manual (MPTOM) as documented in this grant of exemption.

30. At least 3 days before aerial filming, the operator of the UAS affected by this exemption must submit a written Plan of Activities to the local Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) with jurisdiction over the area of proposed filming. The 3-day notification may be waived with the concurrence of the FSDO. The plan of activities must include at least the following:
- a. Dates and times for all flights;
 - b. Name and phone number of the operator for the UAS aerial filming conducted under this grant of exemption;
 - c. Name and phone number of the person responsible for the on-scene operation of the UAS;
 - d. Make, model, and serial or N-Number of UAS to be used;
 - e. Name and certificate number of UAS PICs involved in the aerial filming;
 - f. A statement that the operator has obtained permission from property owners and/or local officials to conduct the filming production event; the list of those who gave permission must be made available to the inspector upon request;
 - g. Signature of exemption holder or representative; and
 - h. A description of the flight activity, including maps or diagrams of any area, city, town, county, and/or state over which filming will be conducted and the altitudes essential to accomplish the operation.
31. Flight operations may be conducted closer than 500 feet from participating persons consenting to be involved and necessary for the filming production, as specified in the exemption holder's MPTOM.

Unless otherwise specified in this grant of exemption, the UAS, the UAS PIC, and the UAS operations must comply with all applicable parts of 14 CFR including, but not limited to, parts 45, 47, 61, and 91.

This exemption terminates on April, 30, 2017, unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

Sincerely,

/s/

John S. Duncan
Director, Flight Standards Service

January 30, 2015

U.S. Department of Transportation
Docket Management System
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Exemption Request Under Section 333 of the FAA Reform Act and
Part 11 of the Federal Aviation Regulations

Dear Sir or Madam:

Pursuant to Section 333 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (the “Reform Act”) and 14 C.F.R. Part 11, Eric Silberg Photography (“ESP”), operating the DJI Inspire 1 Unmanned Aircraft System (“UAS” or “Inspire”), seeks an exemption from the Federal Aviation Regulations (“FARs”) listed below and discussed in Appendix A. Attached as Appendix B is a summary of this request.

The requested exemption would permit commercial operation of ESP’s Inspire, which weighs under 7 lbs. and performs aerial photography and videography using onboard cameras. Applications for these UAS devices and associated data processing functions include residential and commercial real estate, event coverage, surveying, inspection, and artistic endeavors. Use of the Inspire for aerial photography reduces the need to operate conventional aircraft for the same purpose and provides very high quality imagery at a fraction of the cost of surveys using conventional aircraft. These savings result in enhanced efficiency and productivity for the affected activities, as well as environmental benefits.¹

Operations under the exemption will be subject to strict operating requirements and conditions to ensure at least an equivalent level of safety to currently authorized operations using manned aircraft and under conditions as may be modified by the FAA as required by Section 333.

As described more fully below, the requested exemption would authorize commercial operations of aerial surveys using the Inspire, which at under 7 lbs. is small in size. The Inspire will be operated under controlled conditions at low altitude in airspace that is limited in scope, as described more fully herein; it will have automated control features, as described below. The Inspire will be operated by an

¹ See, e.g. Jack Nicas, *Drones Find Fans Among Farmers, Filmmakers*, WALL STREET JOURNAL (March 10, 2014, 7:45 PM) (describing how an overseas surveyor used to spend 25,000 Euro (\$34,345) to survey 15 square kilometers with a team of 12 surveyors, and it would take 2 to 3 weeks to collect all the data. With a Trimble UX5, he accomplished the same task for 5,000 Euro and got all the data he needed in 3 to 4 days. Because the surveys cost him less to perform, he passes those savings on to his customers.), *available at*: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304732804579425342990070808>.

individual who has passed an FAA approved ground training exam and a training program for the UAS. Finally, the airspace in which the UAS will operate will be disclosed to the FAA in advance.

ESP respectfully submits that because this small, unmanned aerial vehicle—the Inspire—will be used in lieu of comparatively hazardous operations now conducted with fixed wing and rotary conventional aircraft, the FAA can have confidence that the operations will achieve at least an equivalent level or greater level of safety. Approval of this exemption would thereby enhance safety and fulfill the Secretary of Transportation’s (the FAA Administrator’s) responsibilities under Section 333(c) of the Reform Act to “establish requirements for the safe operation of such aircraft systems in the national airspace system.”

The name and address of the applicant are:

Eric Silberg Photography
Attn: Eric Silberg
Ph: 240-602-9675
Email: eric@ericsilberg.com
7728 Ivymount Terrace
Potomac, MD 20854

The regulations from which the exemption is requested are as follows:

- 14 C.F.R. Part 21
- 14 C.F.R. 45.23(b)
- 14 C.F.R. 61.113(a) & (b)
- 14 C.F.R. 61.133(a)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.7(b)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.9(b)(2)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.109(a)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.119
- 14 C.F.R. 91.151(a)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.203(a) & (b)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.405(a)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.407(a)(1)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.409(a)(2)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.417(a)

Appendix A discusses each rule listed above and explains why exemptions pursuant to the proposal set forth in this letter are appropriate, provide an equivalent level of safety, and are in the public interest.

THE APPLICABLE LEGAL STANDARD UNDER SECTION 333

ESP submits that grant of this exemption application for use of the Inspire in precision aerial surveys will advance the Congressional mandate in Section 333 of the Reform Act to accelerate the

introduction of UASs into the national airspace system (“NAS”) if it can be accomplished safely. This law directs the Secretary of Transportation to consider whether certain UASs may operate safely in the NAS before completion of the rulemaking required under Section 332 of the Reform Act. In making this determination, the Secretary is required to determine which types of UASs do not create a hazard to users of the NAS or the public or pose a threat to national security in light of the following:

- The UAS’s size, weight, speed, and operational capability;
- Operation of the UAS in close proximity to airports and populated areas; and
- Operation of the UAS within visual line of sight of the operator.

Reform Act § 333(a)(1). If the Secretary determines that such vehicles “may operate safely in the national airspace system, the Secretary shall establish requirements for the safe operation of such aircraft in the national airspace system.” *Id.* §333(c).²

The Federal Aviation Act expressly grants the FAA the authority to issue exemptions. This statutory authority, by its terms, includes exempting civil aircraft, as the term is defined under §40101 of the Act, from the requirement that all civil aircraft must have a current airworthiness certificate and those regulations requiring commercial pilots to operate aircraft in commercial service:

The Administrator may grant an exemption from a requirement of a regulation prescribed under subsection (a) or (b) of this section or any of sections 44702-44716 of this title if the Administrator finds the exemption is in the public interest.

49 U.S.C. §44701(f). *See also* 49 USC §44711(a); 49 USC §44704; 14 CFR §91.203(a)(1).

The grant of the requested exemption is in the public interest based on the clear direction in Section 333 of the Reform Act; the additional authority in the Federal Aviation Act, as amended; the strong equivalent level of safety surrounding the proposed operations; and the significant public benefit, including enhanced safety and cost savings associated with transitioning to UASs for aerial survey photography. Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests that the FAA grant the requested exemption without delay.

Airworthiness of the Inspire

A critical element of the exemption application involves evidence of the airworthiness of the Inspire. ESP believes that it is in compliance with the requirements of Order 8130.34C, Airworthiness Certification of Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Optionally Piloted Aircraft, in its use of systems

² Applicant submits that this provision places a duty on the Administrator to not only process applications for exemptions under Section 333, but for the Administrator, if he deems the conditions proposed herein require modification in order to allow approval, to supply conditions for the safe operation of the UAS. ESP welcomes the opportunity to consult with FAA staff in order to address any issues or concerns that this proposal may raise that they believe may require modification.

developed by DJI.³ The Inspire has a high degree of redundancy and numerous safety features, including:

- Return-to-home failsafe in the event of a loss of communications
- Configurable limitations for area of operation and altitude
- Configurable limitations for vertical and horizontal speed

Additional safety features added by ESP in construction of the Inspire UAS include:

- High visibility lighting system

The criteria set forth in the Order specify the substantive showings of the device's safety and fitness for operation to ensure that the FAA has sufficient basis to evaluate the aircraft's safety.

Mandatory Operating Conditions

Grant of the exemption to ESP will be subject to the following mandatory conditions, which are based upon operating conditions set forth for operation of UAS by public entities pursuant to Certificates of Authorization, with additional restrictions:

- All operations to occur in Class G airspace.
- Operations to avoid congested or populated areas, which are depicted in yellow on VFR charts.
- Operations to be conducted over private or controlled-access property.
- Permission from land owner/controller required before commencing any flight.
- Operations to occur during Visual Flight Rules Meteorological Conditions (VMC).
- Aircraft to remain within Visual Line of Sight (VLOS).
 - VLOS guaranteed with a cylinder of operation around operator of 1/2 nautical miles (NM).
 - Cylinder walls may be expanded by observer with ability to control aircraft.
- Operations to occur during daylight hours.
- Above Ground Level (AGL) altitude to be restricted to 400 feet.
- All operations conducted in vicinity of airport to remain more than 2.5 NM from centerline azimuth of runway centerline measured from runway thresholds.
- Operator will file a NOTAM for each flight, as required.
- All required permissions and permits will be obtained from territorial, state, county or city jurisdictions, including local law enforcement, fire, or other appropriate governmental agencies.

Operator Requirements

ESP respectfully proposes that operator requirements should take into account the characteristics of the particular UAS. Certain UASs, such as the ESP Inspire, are characterized by a high degree of pre-

3 ESP is submitting the following documents in support of this exemption application for the Inspire: 1) Inspire Preflight Checklist (Exhibit 1); 2) Inspire Operations and Maintenance Manual (Exhibit 2); and 3) Inspire safety Guidelines (Exhibit 3).

programmed control and various built-in technical capabilities that limit the potential for operation outside of the operating conditions set forth above.

The Inspire has a semi-autonomous navigation and control system comprised of a Ground Control Station (GCS) and auto-pilot system. All flights are pre-programmed with GPS guidance and do not require human intervention. Flight mission area and routing cannot be changed after launch. Flights are not directed by positive manual control, nor are evasive maneuvers. In the case of unplanned events, the operator inputs pre-programmed evasive maneuvers from the control unit and the control unit executes that maneuver. Pre-programmed operator interventions include diversion to the right; initiation of holding at present position; suspension of mission; fly back to launch point; fly to point and hold; abort mission and land; and emergency power cut off and land (Flight Termination System).⁷ Additional automated safety functions and safety enhancing features of the Inspire include the following:

- Auto-pilot detection of lost GPS or of insufficient satellites initiates an immediate vertical landing, unless overridden by pilot in command.
- Low power on the aircraft triggers escalating alarms at GCS at 35% and 10% levels.
- If the auto-pilot detects a lost-link to the GCS for longer than 30 seconds, return-to-home sequence initiates.
- The Inspire is inherently unstable, so auto-pilot failure will result in a rapid exit from flight.
- Aircraft has an on-board failsafe that limits vertical speed to approximately 6 m/s (configurable).
- The aircraft, weighing less than 7 lbs., fully loaded, is constructed of composite material intended to absorb impact energy.
- The motors are driven by pulse width modulated signals, not analog signals.

Given these safety features, ESP proposes that operators of the Inspire should not be required to hold a commercial or private pilot certification. Instead, operators should be required to:

- have successfully completed, at a minimum, FAA private pilot ground instruction and passed the FAA Private Pilot written examination or FAA-recognized equivalents;
- have successfully demonstrated capability to operate UAS in accordance with manufacturer standards.

ESP notes that the FAA has found that safety factors permitted operation of UASs by operators with these qualifications in the case of operations pursuant to public COAs when the mandatory operating conditions specified above were present. See Federal Aviation Administration, Notice N-8900.227, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Operational Approval, at 20-21 (July 30, 2013). The FAA has the statutory authority to grant exemptions to the requirements for and privileges associated with the grant of airmen's certificates. 49 USC §44701 (f).

In summary, applicant seeks an exemption from the FARs set forth above and in Appendix A to allow commercial operations of a small unmanned vehicle conducting precision aerial surveys.

Approval of the exemption allowing commercial operations of the Inspire for precision survey work will enhance safety by reducing risk. Conventional aerial survey operations, using jet or piston-powered aircraft present risks associated with vehicles that weigh in the neighborhood of 5,000 to 7,000 lbs., or more, carry large quantities of fuel, passengers, and, in some cases, cargo. Such aircraft must fly to and from the survey location. In contrast, a Inspire weighing less than 7 lbs. and powered by batteries eliminates a portion of that risk given the reduced mass and lack of combustible fuel carried on board. The Inspire is carried to the survey location, not flown there. The Inspire will carry no passengers or crew and, therefore, will not expose any individuals to the risks associated with manned aircraft flights.

Additionally, no national security issue is raised by the grant of the requested exemptions. Given the size, load carrying capacity, speed at which it operates, and the fact that it carries no explosives or other dangerous materials, the Inspire poses no threat to national security.

The operation of the Inspire, weighing less than 7 lbs., for precision surveys in accordance with the strict conditions outlined above, will provide an equivalent level of safety supporting the grant of the exemptions requested herein, including exempting ESP from the requirements of Part 21.

The Inspire's satisfaction of the criteria set forth in Section 333 of the Reform Act—size, weight, speed, operating capabilities, lack of proximity to airports and populated areas, operation within visual line of sight, and national security—and its showing of an equivalent level of safety as it may relate to the requirement for a pilot's license, provide more than adequate justification for the grant of the requested exemptions allowing commercial operation of the Inspire in the commercial precision aerial survey business.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eric Silberg". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Eric Silberg
Eric Silberg Photography

APPENDIX A

EXEMPTION REQUEST AND EQUIVALENT LEVEL OF SAFETY SHOWINGS UNDER APPLICABLE RULES SUBJECT TO EXEMPTION

ESP requests an exemption from the following regulations as well as any additional regulations that may technically apply to the operation of the Inspire:

14 C.F.R. § 45.23(b): Marking of the Aircraft

The regulation provides:

When marks include only the Roman capital letter “N” and the registration number is displayed on limited, restricted or light-sport category aircraft or experimental or provisionally certificated aircraft, the operator must also display on that aircraft near each entrance to the cabin, cockpit, or pilot station, in letters not less than 2 inches nor more than 6 inches high, the words “limited,” “restricted,” “light-sport,” “experimental,” or “provisional,” as applicable.

The Inspire has no entrance to the cabin, cockpit, or pilot station on which the word “Experimental” can be placed. Given the size of the UAV, two-inch lettering will be impossible. The word “Experimental” will be placed on the forward fuselage in compliance with § 45.29(f).

The equivalent level of safety will be achieved by having the Inspire marked as required by § 45.29(f) where the pilot, observer, and others working with the UAV will see the identification of the UAS as “Experimental.” The FAA has issued the following exemptions to this regulation, Exemption Nos. 10700, 8738, 10167 and 10167A.

14 C.F.R. Part 21, Subpart H: Airworthiness Certificates 14 CFR § 91.203(a)(1)

Section 91.203(a)(1) requires all civil aircraft to have a certificate of airworthiness. Part 21, Subpart H, entitled Airworthiness Certificates, establishes the procedural requirements for the issuance of airworthiness certificates as required by FAR § 91.203(a)(1). Given the size of the aircraft (under 7lbs.) and the limited operating area associated with its utilization, it is unnecessary to go through the certificate of airworthiness process under Part 21 Subpart H to achieve or exceed current safety levels. Such an exemption meets the requirements of an equivalent level of safety under Part 11 and Section 333 of the Reform Act. The Federal Aviation Act and Section 333 of the Reform Act both authorize the FAA to exempt aircraft from the requirement for an airworthiness certificate, upon consideration of the size, weight, speed, operational capability, and proximity to airports and populated areas of the UAS involved.

In this case, an analysis of these criteria demonstrates that the Inspire operated without an airworthiness certificate, under the conditions proposed herein, will be at least as safe, or safer, than a conventional aircraft (fixed wing or rotorcraft) with an airworthiness certificate. The Inspire weighs less than 7 lbs.

fully loaded. It will not carry a pilot or passenger, will not carry flammable fuel, and will operate exclusively within an area pre-disclosed and in compliance with conditions set forth herein. Operations under this exemption will be tightly controlled and monitored by both the operator, pursuant to the conditions set forth above, and by local public safety requirements. The FAA will have advance notice of all operations through the filing of NOTAMs. Receipt of the prior permission of the land owner, the size of the aircraft, the lack of flammable fuel, and the fact that the aircraft is carried to the location and not flown there all establish the equivalent level of safety. The Inspire construction with absorbent material provides at least an equivalent level of safety to that of such operations being conducted with conventional aircraft that would be orders-of-magnitude larger and would be carrying passengers, cargo, and flammable fuel.

14 C.F.R. § 61.113(a) & (b); 61.133(a): Private Pilot Privileges and Limitations; Pilot in Command; Commercial Pilot Privileges and Limitations.

Section 61.113(a) & (b) limit private pilots to non-commercial operations. Unlike a conventional aircraft that carries a pilot, passengers, and cargo, the Inspire in this case is remotely controlled with no passengers or property of others on board. Section 61.133(a) requires an individual with a commercial pilot's license to be pilot in command of an aircraft for compensation or hire. ESP respectfully proposes that operator requirements should take into account the characteristics of the particular UAS. ESP's Inspire has a high degree of pre-programmed control and various built-in technical capabilities that strictly limit the potential for operation outside of the operating conditions set forth in the exemption application.

The Inspire has a semi-autonomous navigation and control system comprised of a Ground Control Station (GCS) and auto-pilot system. All flights are pre-programmed with precision GPS guidance and do not require human intervention. Flight mission area and routing cannot be changed after launch. Flights are not directed by positive manual control, nor are evasive maneuvers. In the case of unplanned events, the operator inputs pre-programmed evasive maneuvers from the control unit, and the control unit executes that maneuver. Pre-programmed operator interventions include diversion to the right; initiation of holding at present position; suspension of mission; fly back to launch point; fly to point and hold; abort mission and land; and emergency power cut off and land (Flight Termination System).

Additional automated safety functions and safety enhancing features of the Inspire include the following:

- Auto-pilot detection of lost GPS or of insufficient satellites initiates an immediate spiral landing.
- Low power on the aircraft triggers escalating alarms at GCS at 35% and 10% levels.
- If the auto-pilot detects a lost-link to the GCS for longer than 30 seconds, landing procedure begins.
- The Inspire is inherently unstable, so auto-pilot fail will result in very rapid exit from flight.
- Aircraft has an on-board failsafe that limits speed in the event of dive to approximately 14 m/s.

- The aircraft, weighing less than 7 lbs., fully loaded, is constructed of composite material which is intended to absorb impact energy.
- The motors are driven by pulse width modulated signals, not analog signals.

Given these safety features, ESP proposes that operators of the Inspire should not be required to hold a commercial or private pilot certification. Instead, operators should be required to:

- have successfully completed, at a minimum, FAA private pilot ground instruction and passed the FAA Private Pilot written examination or FAA-recognized equivalents;
- have completed the manufacturer's training program for operation of the UAS. The manufacturer's training program will have been satisfactorily reviewed through the SAC process.

ESP notes that the FAA has found that safety factors permitted operation of UASs by operators with these qualifications in the case of operations pursuant to public COAs where the mandatory operating conditions specified above are present. *See* Federal Aviation Administration, Notice N-8900.227, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Operational Approval, at 20-21 (July 30, 2013). The FAA has the statutory authority, granted at 49 U.S.C. §44701(f) to waive the pilot requirements for commercial operations.

Given these conditions and restrictions, an equivalent level of safety will be provided by allowing operation of the Inspire without a private pilot's certificate or a commercial pilot's certificate, under the conditions set forth herein.

The risks associated with the operation of the Inspire (given its size, speed, operational capabilities, and lack of combustible fuel) are so diminished from the level of risk associated with private pilot operations or commercial operations contemplated by Part 61 with conventional aircraft (fixed wing or rotorcraft), that allowing operations of the UAS as set forth above meets or exceeds the present level of safety provided under 14 C.F.R. § 61.113(a) & (b) and does not rise to the level of requiring a commercial pilot to operate the aircraft under § 61.133(a).

14 C.F.R. § 91.7(a): Civil aircraft airworthiness.

This regulation requires that no person may operate a civil aircraft unless it is in airworthy condition. Should the exemption be granted allowing commercial operation of the Inspire without an airworthiness certificate, no standard will exist for airworthiness of the Inspire. Given the size of the aircraft and the requirements that have presumably already been met in the SAC approval process for the Inspire (for instance, the Inspire's Maintenance & Inspection Manual and Safety Checklist), an equivalent level of safety will be achieved by insuring compliance with the ESP manuals prior to each flight.

14 C.F.R. § 91.9(b)(2): Civil Aircraft Flight Manual in the Aircraft.

The regulation provides:

No person may operate a U.S.-registered civil aircraft ...

(2)...For which an Airplane or Rotorcraft Flight Manual is not required by §21.5 of this chapter, unless there is available in the aircraft a current approved airplane or Rotorcraft Flight Manual, approved manual material, markings, and placards, or any combination thereof.

Given the size and configuration of the Inspire, it has no ability or place to carry such a flight manual on the aircraft, not only because there is no pilot on board, but because there is no room or capacity to carry such an item on the aircraft.

The equivalent level of safety will be achieved by keeping the flight manual (see, e.g., User Guide, Exhibit 2) at the ground control point where the pilot flying the UAS will have immediate access to it. The FAA has issued the following exemptions to this regulation: Exemption Nos. 8607, 8737, 8738, 9299, 9299A, 9565, 9565B, 10167, 10167A, 10602, 32827, and 10700.

14 C.F.R. § 91.109(a) & 91.319(a)(1): Flight Instruction

These regulations provide that no person may operate a civil aircraft (except a manned free balloon) that is being used for flight instruction unless that aircraft has fully functioning dual controls.

The Inspire is a remotely piloted aircraft and by design, does not have fully functional dual controls. Flight control is accomplished through the use of a control box that communicates with the aircraft via radio communications. The flight plan is pre-programmed into the auto pilot before flight and only in unusual circumstances will the pilot input control functions to alter the pre-programmed flight. If instruction is accomplished through a training program, as set forth in Exhibit 2, an equivalent level of safety will be assured. The FAA has approved exemptions for flight training without fully functional dual controls for a number of aircraft and for flight instruction in experimental aircraft. See Exemption Nos. 5778K & 9862A. The equivalent level of safety will be achieved by the manufacturer providing the training as outlined, for example, in Exhibit 2 and through the use of experienced and qualified pilots familiar with the Inspire.

14 CFR § 91.119: Minimum Safe Altitudes

Section 91.119 establishes safe altitudes for operation of civil aircraft. Specifically, 91.119(c) limits aircraft flying over areas other than congested areas to an altitude of 500 feet above the surface, except over open water or sparsely populated areas. In those cases, the aircraft may not be operated closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle, or structure.

As set forth herein, the Inspire will never operate at higher than 400 feet AGL. It will, however, be operated to avoid congested or populated areas that are depicted in yellow on VFR sectional charts.

Because aerial survey work must be accomplished at relatively low altitudes and at altitudes less than 500 feet AGL, an exemption from Section 91.119(c) is needed.

The equivalent level of safety will be achieved given the size, weight, speed, and material with which the Inspire is built. Also, no flight will be taken without the permission of the land owner or those who control the land. Because of the advance notice to the landowner, all affected individuals will be aware of the survey flights. Compared to aerial survey operations conducted with aircraft or rotorcraft weighing far more than 7 lbs. and carrying flammable fuel, any risk associated with these operations will be far less than those currently allowed with conventional aircraft operating at or below 500 feet AGL. Indeed, the low-altitude operations of the UAS will maintain separation between these small-UAS operations and the operations of conventional aircraft that must comply with Section 91.119.

14 C.F.R. § 91.151(a): Fuel Requirements for Flight in VFR Conditions

This regulation prohibits an individual from beginning “a flight in an airplane under VFR conditions unless (considering wind and forecast weather conditions) there is enough fuel to fly to the first point of intended landing and, assuming normal cruising speed – (1) During the day, to fly after that for at least 30 minutes; or (2) At night, to fly after that for at least 45 minutes.”

The Inspire batteries provide approximately 50 minutes of powered flight. Without an exemption from § 14 CFR 91.151, the UAS’s flights would be limited to approximately 20 minutes in length. Given the limitations on its proposed operations and the location of those proposed operations, a longer time frame for flight in daylight VFR conditions is reasonable.

ESP believes that an exemption from 14 CFR § 91.151(a) is safe and within the scope of a prior exemption. *See* Exemption 10673 (allowing Lockheed Martin Corporation to operate without compliance with 91.151(a)). Operating the small UAS, without 30 minutes of reserve fuel does not engender the type of risks that Section 91.151(a) was meant to prevent given the size and speed at which the UAS operates. The fact that it carries no pilot, passenger, or cargo also enhances its safety. Additionally, limiting Inspire flights to 20 minutes would greatly reduce their utility. In the unlikely event that the Inspire should run out of fuel, it would simply land. Given its weight and construction material, the risks are less than contemplated by the current regulation.

ESP believes that an equivalent level of safety can be achieved by maintaining 10 minutes of reserve fuel, which, allowing 40 minutes of flight time, would be more than adequate to return the UAS to its planned landing zone from anywhere in its operating area.

14 C.F.R. § 91.203 (a) & (b): Carrying Civil Aircraft Certification and Registration

This regulation provides as follows:

- (a)...no person may operate a civil aircraft unless it has...an appropriate and current airworthiness certificate.

(b) No person may operate a civil aircraft unless the airworthiness certificate required by paragraph (a) of this section or a special flight authorization issued under §91.715 is displayed at the cabin or cockpit entrance so that it is legible to passengers or crew.

The Inspire fully loaded weighs no more than 7 lbs. As such, there is no ability or place to carry certification and registration documents or to display them on the UAS. In addition, there is no pilot on board the aircraft.

An equivalent level of safety will be achieved by keeping these documents at the ground control point where the pilot flying the UAS will have immediate access to them. The FAA has issued numerous exemptions to this regulation. A representative sample of other exceptions includes Exemption Nos. 9565, 9665, 9789, 9789A, 9797, 9797A, 9816A, and 10700.

14 C.F.R. § 91.405(a); 407(a)(1); 409(a)(2); 417(a): Maintenance Inspections

Section 91.405(a) requires that an aircraft operator or owner “shall have that aircraft inspected as prescribed in subpart E of this part and shall between required inspections, except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, have discrepancies repaired as prescribed in part 43 of this chapter...” Section 91.407 similarly makes reference to requirements in Part 43; Section 91.409(a)(2) requires an annual inspection for the issuance of an air worthiness certificate. Section 91.417(a) requires the owner or operator to keep records showing certain maintenance work that has been accomplished by certificated mechanics, under Part 43, or licensed pilots and records of approval of the aircraft for return to service.

Maintenance of the Inspire will be accomplished by the owner/operator pursuant to the manuals, such as Exhibit 3, provided by ESP. An equivalent level of safety will be achieved because the UAS is small in size, will operate only in restricted predetermined areas, and is not a complex mechanical device. As provided in the attached User Manual and the Safety Checklist, the operator of Inspire will ensure that the UAS is in working order prior to initiating flight, perform required maintenance, and keep a log of any maintenance that is performed. Moreover, the operator is the person most familiar with the aircraft and is best suited to maintain the aircraft in an airworthy condition and to ensure an equivalent level of safety.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF ESP SECTION 333 EXEMPTION REQUEST

ESP hereby provides pursuant to Part 11 a summary of its exemption application to allow commercial operation of the Inspire unmanned aircraft in precision aerial survey work. An exemption is requested from the following regulations:

- 14 C.F.R. Part 21
- 14 C.F.R. 45.23(b)
- 14 C.F.R. 61.113(a) & (b)
- 14 C.F.R. 61.133(a)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.7(b)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.9(b)(2)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.109(a)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.119
- 14 C.F.R. 91.151(a)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.203(a) & (b)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.405(a)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.407(a)(1)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.409(a)(2)
- 14 C.F.R. 91.417(a)