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APWA Hosts Virtual Brief on Drones and Public Works - Assisting in Emergency Management

Washington, DC – September 22, 2020– Today, the American Public Works Association (APWA) hosted a virtual interactive briefing to Congress, *Drones and Public Works - Assisting in Emergency Management*. The brief was held in cooperation with the U.S. House of Representatives Public Works & Infrastructure Caucus. Co-Chairs for the Caucus, Representatives Dina Titus (D-NV) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), shared by video their support for the important roles public works professionals have in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and emergency situations. Drones are a key tool in mitigation efforts, surveying damage and activities on the ground, as well as a safer way to gather information and plan for response to dangerous situations.

The brief was moderated by APWA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Scott D. Grayson, CAE and included APWA President Mary Joyce Ivers, Deputy Director of Public Works for Ventura, California, APWA Member Ray Funnye, Director of Public Services for Georgetown County, South Carolina and Basil Yap, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)-Integration Pilot Program (IPP) Manager for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

“As first responders, public works agencies are realizing the potential of using Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), or drones, to enhance their missions,” said APWA President Mary Joyce Ivers. “Public works professionals use drones in emergency operations including traffic control and creating safe zones for evacuations, as well as for general infrastructure projects including but not limited to, sewer and drain explorations, bridge and road inspections, and monitoring roadway incidents.”

In speaking about the local level use and need for flexible and appropriate regulation of drones, Mr. Yap stated, “Often, we hear, ‘we don’t want a patchwork of regulations throughout the country,’ but an example is our highway system: the stop signs are the same, the speed limits are the same, we build all of our roads to the same dimensions; but the state and the local government get to choose where the stop sign and roads go, and what the speed limit is. These are some of the options we’d love to explore with the FAA: what kinds of roles and responsibilities do they have in mind for the local level?”

To support emergency responders and other entities affiliated with them, the FAA can quickly issue authorizations for responses to natural disasters and other emergencies. For more information, please visit: www.faa.gov/go/EmergencyWaiver.

“APWA understands that the process for creating and implementing policies to incorporate UAS into our daily lives will be just that, a process. It is important to regulate use of drones while ensuring that we do not impede innovation or the ability for public works professionals to utilize drones for mitigation of risk, and to better protect critical infrastructure – especially during natural disasters or emergencies,” said APWA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Scott D. Grayson, CAE.

The brief was recorded and will be made available on our website, www.apwa.net. Please be sure to subscribe to the *APWA Reporter*, and follow [@APWATWEETS](https://twitter.com/APWATWEETS) and [@APWAGovAffairs](https://twitter.com/APWAGovAffairs) on Twitter to watch for new features.

APWA and its over 30,000 members stand ready as a resource and partner in addressing the needs of our country through the COVID-19 pandemic and into recovery.

For additional information about APWA, please contact Charlie Arena, APWA Public Affairs Manager at carena@apwa.net, or by phone at (202) 218 – 6736.

About APWA

The American Public Works Association (www.apwa.net) is a not-for-profit, international organization of more than 30,000 members involved in the field of public works. APWA serves its members by promoting professional excellence and public awareness through education, advocacy, and the exchange of knowledge. APWA is headquartered in Kansas City, MO, has an office in Washington, D.C., and 63 chapters and 97 branches throughout North America.