Governor Martin O’Malley today joined New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and Virginia Governor Robert McDonnell in submitting a letter supporting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in which the University System of Maryland, Rutgers University and Virginia Tech University agreed to collaborate and partner on a Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) test site. The letter, sent to U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and FAA Administrator Michael Huerta, highlighted the cooperative UAS research conducted by the three universities.

“With the potential to create more than 2,500 well-paying jobs in Maryland over the next 12 years, the Unmanned Aircraft Systems sector has the potential to have a significant positive economic impact on our state,” said Governor O’Malley. “This is an exciting agreement between three world-class educational institutions that takes advantage of the unparalleled capabilities in Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia for research, development and testing, and positions the Mid-Atlantic region as the ideal location for an Unmanned Aircraft Systems test site.”

In Maryland, the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) at Naval Air Station Patuxent River is recognized as the world’s leading center of UAS activity. At both the university level and among federal facilities, Maryland has been testing and developing UAS technology for more than two decades. Maryland’s UAS proposal, submitted to the FAA in May, includes the University System of Maryland campuses in College Park, Baltimore County and Eastern Shore, general aviation airports in Crisfield and St. Mary’s County, federal and industry partners and community organizations such as the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance, the Patuxent Partnership, and the Joint Atlantic and Chesapeake Range Collaborative.

“We are thankful to our entire Congressional delegation, especially Congressman Steny Hoyer, who worked diligently to grow this coalition, the universities for their spirit of cooperation, and to partner companies in each state whose support is testament to the potential of this initiative,” said Governor O’Malley.

“This memorandum of understanding between the University System of Maryland, Rutgers University, and Virginia Tech significantly strengthens our bid for one of six UAS test site designations chosen by the Federal Aviation Administration,” stated Congressman Hoyer. “With the presence of three outstanding higher education institutions; federal facilities, such as Pax River Naval Air Station and Webster Field; and strong industry partners, I’m optimistic that we are st