

Akin

Autonomous Akin



May 2024

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Our newsletter reflects the focus of Akin's cross-practice autonomous systems and advanced mobility team on developments in the regulatory, policy, trade, intellectual property, and cybersecurity and privacy spaces. Autonomous Akin brings you the latest news and developments so that you can keep a pulse on what is happening in government and industry that is impactful for your business. For our new readers, you can subscribe to future issues of this newsletter [here](#). Thank you!

In This Issue

- [Akin Spotlight](#)
- [Updates from Washington](#)
- [Industry News](#)
- [Akin Thought Leadership](#)
- [Events](#)

Akin Spotlight

2024 FAA Reauthorization - Key Developments in Emerging Aviation

After months of negotiations and numerous last-minute extensions, the President signed into law the Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act, which funds the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) through Fiscal Year (FY) 2028 with over \$105 billion in appropriations.

[Read the Article](#)

Updates from Washington

On the Hill

Senate Passes Sweeping FAA Bill Focused on Safety and Consumer Protections - NBC News

“The Senate late on Thursday overwhelmingly passed a broad aviation bill to boost air traffic controller staffing, increase funding to avert runway close-call incidents and speed refunds for canceled flights. The \$105 billion, five-year measure reauthorizes the Federal Aviation Administration.”

[Read the Article](#)

In the Executive Branch

FAA, EASA Release New Certification Criteria for Air Taxis - *Flying Magazine*

“The FAA and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on Monday made major strides toward establishing a certification pathway for advanced air mobility (AAM) aircraft, such as electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) air taxis.”

[Read the Article](#)

U.S. Tightens Car Mileage Rules, Part of Strategy to Fight Climate Change - *New York Times*

“The Biden administration on Friday tightened vehicle fuel mileage standards, part of its strategy to transform the American auto market into one that is dominated by electric vehicles that do not emit the pollution that is heating the planet.”

[Read the Article](#)

White House Takes Aim at Shipbuilding, Other Measures in Defense Bill - *DefenseNews*

“The White House on Tuesday released a statement taking aim at several measures in the House’s fiscal 2025 defense policy bill ahead of votes scheduled for later this week. While the statement praised the House Armed Services Committee for its “strong, bipartisan” work on the \$884 billion bill, it raised objections to some of its provisions on shipbuilding, the creation of an Army drone corps, missile defense and pricing transparency for defense contractors.”

[Read the Article](#)

In the Courts

Drone Pilot Can't Offer Mapping Without North Carolina Surveyor's License, Court Says - AP News

“A North Carolina board that regulates land surveyors didn't violate a drone photography pilot's constitutional rights when it told him to stop advertising and offering aerial map services because he lacked a state license, a federal appeals court ruled on Monday. The panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in upholding a trial court's decision, found the free-speech protections of Michael Jones and his 360 Virtual Drone Services business weren't violated by the state's requirement for a license to offer surveying services.”

[Read the Article](#)

Industry News

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

American Aerospace's Drones Granted First FAA Waiver for BVLOS Commercial Operation - *Military and Aerospace Electronics*

“Iridium Communications Inc. in McLean, Va. announced a development in uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) operations beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS). American Aerospace Technologies, Inc., an Iridium partner in Conshohocken, Pa. received a waiver from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to conduct UAS surveillance of critical infrastructure in California's San Joaquin Valley for multinational oil and gas company Chevron.”

[Read the Article](#)

Amazon Gets FAA Approval That Allows it to Expand Drone Deliveries for Online Orders - *Las Vegas Sun*

“Federal regulators have given Amazon key permission that will allow it to expand its drone delivery program, the company announced Thursday. In a blog post posted on its website, Seattle-based Amazon said that the Federal Aviation Administration has given its Prime Air delivery service the OK to operate drones ‘beyond visual line of sight,’ removing a barrier that has prevented its drones from traveling longer distances. With the approval, Amazon pilots can now operate drones remotely without seeing it with their own eyes.”

[Read the Article](#)

Wing Considers Manufacturing Delivery Drones in India - *DroneLife*

“As the US government works to lessen their reliance upon Chinese manufacturing, Google subsidiary and residential drone delivery pioneer Wing make plans to manufacture their delivery drones in India. The move is a major win for the burgeoning Indian drone industry, and is being touted by the Indian government and media as a vote of confidence.”

[Read the Article](#)

In the Wake of FAA Reauthorization, Drone Delivery Companies Plan Expansion - *DroneLife*

“DroneUp, one of the largest drone delivery companies in the U.S., will likely expand its operations as a direct result of the passage of the bill to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, Anthony Vittone, the company’s COO said in an interview. ‘I think the authorization bill is probably one of the biggest things to help the advancement of drones into the national airspace, maybe even bigger than Part 107,’ Vittone said.”

[Read the Article](#)

Advanced Air Mobility

Futuristic Electric Vehicles About to Become Reality in Georgia - *GPB News*

“At least 20 states – including Georgia – are starting to explore AAM technology, an investment of more than \$8 billion today that is expected to grow to \$45 billion by 2030, Clement Solomon, director of the Georgia Department of Transportation’s Intermodal Division, told members of the State Transportation Board last month. ... In Augusta, private air charter operator Bravo Air is working with Japan’s SkyDrive to begin flying passengers on short trips aboard eVTOLs the Japanese company has begun building through a joint venture with Suzuki Motor Corp.”

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Airbus Buys U.S. Drone Developer - *American Machinist*

“Airbus Helicopters completed its purchase of AeroVel, developer of an unmanned vertical takeoff and landing system used for tactical missions. No price has been reported for the acquisition of the company and its Flexrotor compact drone unit designed for intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) missions at sea and over land.”

[Read the Article](#)

Autonomy & Electric Vehicles

How Electric Car Batteries Might Aid the Grid (and Win Over Drivers) - *New York Times*

“Electric cars are more expensive than gasoline models largely because batteries cost so much. But new technology could turn those pricey devices into an asset, giving owners benefits like reduced utility bills, lower lease payments or free parking.”

[Read the Article](#)

Autonomous Vehicle Startup Takes Off by Picking Off Easier Routes - *Bloomberg*

“The company just inked a deal with Japan’s Isuzu for a \$30 million investment, with the two planning to mass-produce self-driving medium duty trucks starting in 2027 . . . Gatik’s progress stems in part from what its vehicles don’t do. Its trucks provide middle-mile

delivery services from distribution centers to stores on easy and predictable routes. The trucks rarely go to more than five different destinations and usually no farther than 300 miles. With the driver out, the top speed is 45 miles per hour.”

[Read the Article](#)

UK’s Autonomous Vehicle Legislation Becomes Law, Paving The Way For First Driverless Cars By 2026 - TechCrunch

“The U.K.’s self-proclaimed “world-leading” regulations for self-driving cars are now official, after the Automated Vehicles (AV) Act received royal assent – the final rubber stamp any legislation must go through before becoming enshrined in law. The government says that fully self-driving vehicles could be on U.K. roads within two years.”

[Read the Article](#)

Self-Driving Cars Could Lead to a Fourth, White Traffic Signal—Or No Signals at All: Researchers - Fox Business

“The advent of self-driving cars could lead to a number of changes to traffic laws down the road, including a possible fourth traffic signal, researchers say. On top of the ubiquitous red, yellow, and green, a white light could signal that autonomous vehicles are in charge of the intersection.”

[Read the Article](#)

Intellectual Property and Autonomous Systems

Autonomous Thruster Control System Enhances Subsea Capabilities - Unmanned Systems Technology

“Tiburon Subsea has launched its autonomous underwater thruster control technology, JETTE, a pioneering in-line dual vectored subsea robotic controlled propulsion system. The JETTE system offers increased speed, variable controls, maneuverability, durability, and redundancy over traditional UUVs. This design eliminates the long-standing control plane weak points that have plagued UUVs. JETTE provides extended hover/dwell/scan abilities and simplifies maintenance, while providing redundancy and self-rescue. Patent pending, it is a unique system and an evolution in hydrodynamic efficiency.”

[Read the Article](#)

New GM Tech Seeks To Cure An Overlooked Safety Issue - The Street

“The patented tech is designed to make roads safer from a common driver qualm . . . The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on May 16 published a patent filing from the Detroit-based automaker for a system called the “Vehicle Occupant Mental Wellbeing Assessment and Countermeasure Deployment.” Here, a collection of different sensors and electronic modules mounted throughout the interior evaluates what is going on inside the car, and depending on the situation, will use a series of countermeasures to prevent what GM describes as an “undesirable situation.””

Technology, Autonomy, and the Environment

Washington State Approves Drone Use for Methane Emissions Monitoring in New Landfill Regulation - Unmanned Systems

“The Washington State Department of Ecology has introduced a new rule (Chapter 173-408 WAC) for monitoring methane emissions at active and closed municipal solid waste landfills. Effective January 1, 2025, this regulation allows for the use of drones, such as Sniffer Robotics’ SnifferDRONE, to conduct surface emissions monitoring (SEM), enhancing efficiency and safety.”

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Akin Thought Leadership



[GM Touts Racing Innovation, IP Boon as It Bids to Join Formula 1](#) (March 28, 2024)

[Commerce Focuses National Security Scrutiny on 'Connected Vehicle' Supply Chain](#) (March 1, 2024)

[FAA Reauthorization Watch: Provisions of Note for UAS and AAM Companies in the Senate Bill](#) (February 13, 2024)

[Hot Issues in 2024 for TMT Companies](#) (February 6, 2024)

[Three New UK Laws Impacting Autonomous Vehicles, Digital Markets and Personal Data](#) (November 30, 2023)

[CPPA Takes Aim at Connected Cars in First-Ever Review](#) (August 23, 2023)

Events



[2024 FAA Drone and Advanced Air Mobility Symposium](#)

July 30-August 1, 2024
Baltimore, MD

[First Advanced Air Mobility Symposium](#)

September 9-12, 2024
Montreal, Canada



Learn more about Akin's Autonomous Systems and Advanced Mobility practice.

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Questions?

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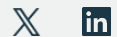


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