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Federal Aviation Administration
Subject: Letter of Intent – FAA Test Site Application
Docket No. 697DCK-26-R-00019
November 24, 2025

To the FAA Test Site Selection Committee:

On behalf of the City of Diamondhead, Mississippi, I am pleased to offer this letter expressing our strong support for the Mississippi State University – Raspet Flight Research Laboratory and their application to serve as an FAA-designated UAS Test Site. Diamondhead is committed to advancing aviation innovation, expanding workforce development opportunities, and supporting technologies that enhance public safety and economic resilience. We view Raspet as an ideal partner in these efforts and believe their selection as an FAA Test Site will significantly benefit our region and the State of Mississippi.

Diamondhead is uniquely positioned to contribute to the FAA Test Site program through our developing partnership with Raspet to establish a long-term multi-domain UAS testing and training academy at the Diamondhead Airport. The city has been working closely with Mississippi State University to explore plans for a sustained training hub capable of supporting multi-rotor, fixed-wing, VTOL, and emerging unmanned systems as well as the complexity of multi-domain missions and coordination. Our shared vision includes developing an academy that serves local, state, and federal agencies; commercial and industrial operators; and aviation professionals seeking advanced training in UAS operations, maintenance, safety management, and mission-specific skill sets.

The Diamondhead Airport provides a highly favorable environment for such a partnership. Its geographic position on the Gulf Coast, diverse surrounding terrain, and adjacency to maritime, industrial, and critical infrastructure environments make it an exceptional location for real-world UAS training and evaluation. The city has already taken steps to support MSU in preparing a long-term partnership at the airport and is prepared to continue aligning infrastructure, zoning, and municipal planning to facilitate the development of Raspet and Test Site-affiliated programs. Our public safety departments, community development offices, and airport stakeholders have expressed strong support for the concept and stand ready to contribute to its safe and successful establishment.



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Our collaboration with Raspet has demonstrated their deep commitment to safety, technical rigor, and operational excellence. Their experience in flight research, unmanned systems integration, and development of national-level training and testing programs directly complement Diamondhead's strategic priorities for economic development and regional capability building. The Test Site designation would further strengthen our partnership, provide a robust foundation for the training academy, and create meaningful opportunities for innovation, workforce advancement, and industry engagement across the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The City of Diamondhead fully supports Raspet's application and is committed to working closely with Mississippi State University to expand and sustain the multi-domain UAS academy at Diamondhead Airport. We believe Raspet's leadership, infrastructure, and expertise will enable safe, responsible, and high-impact unmanned aircraft operations that align with FAA standards and serve the interests of Mississippi and the nation.

Please contact my office if additional information or further discussion is required.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jon McCraw', is written over a blue wavy line.

Jon McCraw
City Manager
City of Diamondhead, Mississippi
jmccraw@diamondhead.ms.gov

