

**Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration**

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
B4UFLY Smartphone App**

INTRODUCTION

This information collection is submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to request an emergency approval for the information collection entitled “B4UFLY Smartphone App”.

Part A. Justification

1. Circumstances that make collection of information necessary.

The FAA has documented over 675 pilot and law enforcement reports of unmanned aircraft ‘events’ in 2015. In comparison, the FAA received 238 of these reports in the entirety of 2014. This increase in reports, particularly in close proximity to airports, suggests that many unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operators are unaware of safety guidelines and policies and are unaware of the potential hazards these operations may pose to manned aircraft operations.

The FAA’s B4UFLY smartphone app will provide situational awareness of flight restrictions – including locations of airports, restricted airspace, special use airspaces, and temporary flight restrictions – based on a user’s current or planned flight location. The risk posed to the National Airspace System (NAS) by increasingly unsafe UAS operations makes the immediate release of this app vital. The app is planned for beta release in August 2015.

In addition, Public Law 112-95, Section 336 requires model aircraft operators to notify the airport operator and air traffic control tower (if one is located at the airport) prior to operating within 5 miles of an airport. Currently, there is no established process to facilitate this exchange of information. The B4UFLY app’s initial concept included providing phone numbers for users to call air traffic control towers (ACTCs) to fulfill this notification requirement. However, further analysis showed that frequent calls to an ACTC could disrupt normal tower functions and possibly create a safety risk. Therefore, the FAA will develop an electronic notification process using functionality in the B4UFLY app.

Users will not be able to fulfill the statutory requirement for notification using the beta version of B4UFLY. This initial version will collect flight data from users, which will help the FAA develop automated procedures for accomplishing electronic notification when Version 1 of B4UFLY is released to the general public (targeted by December 2015). Electronic notification in this manner will ultimately give air traffic personnel real-time information about potentially unsafe UAS operations around airports, enabling immediate safety mitigation activities. It will

also make notification easier for the public, and thus increase compliance with the law.

In order to maintain NAS safety in proximity to airports, air traffic control personnel would need certain basic information about a UAS operator's intended flight in order to assess whether the UAS may disrupt or endanger manned air traffic. This is the same information a user would be asked to provide if they called an ATCT. The data collected by the B4UFLY app during the initial 60-day beta test will help the FAA determine procedures for managing more widespread public use of the B4UFLY app.

This information collection supports the Department of Transportation's strategic goal of safety.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information used.

The data collected during the initial beta test will be used:

1. By the Air Traffic Organization and the Aviation Safety lines of business to assess procedures necessary to provide relevant safety information to ATCT in real time, via the B4UFLY app.
2. By the Air Traffic Organization to make more informed decisions about which UAS operations pose a real risk to the safety of the NAS, and thereby determine in what circumstances notification is essential.

When the full version of the app is released to the general public, the FAA expects data collection through the B4UFLY app to inform real-time decision making in ATCTs and airports.

3. Extent of automated information collection.

Frequent calls to an air traffic control tower would disrupt tower activities to such a degree that the FAA anticipates may endanger the safety of the National Airspace System. Therefore, the FAA has developed the B4UFLY app to facilitate a process for electronic notification, thereby reducing the time burden on both users and FAA personnel.

This data collection would be 100% electronic and automated for the user. The user will be able to quickly tap multiple choice options, and the B4UFLY app automatically pulls the user's location from their smartphone.

Additionally, the implementation of the B4UFLY app should eventually reduce the burden on any user attempting to fly within 5 miles of multiple airports – rather than having to notify each airport air traffic control tower individually, with the full release of B4UFLY, users will be able to provide a single notification that will be routed to all relevant safety personnel within the FAA.

The FAA anticipates data collected during the beta test to help with the development of further automation on the backend, so that ATCT personnel are only alerted to operations that potentially disrupt or endanger NAS safety, and UAS users are not prevented from flying in safe areas.

4. Efforts to identify duplication.

There is no duplication. The FAA has never attempted to systematically collect this type of information from UAS users, who represent a relatively new NAS user group.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses.

The implementation of the B4UFLY app should not impact small business. The app is designed to provide situational awareness specifically to model aircraft operators, who by definition fly for hobby or recreational purposes only.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information.

Data collection through the B4UFLY app during the beta test will be completely voluntary, as the data collection will not constitute the statutory requirement to provide notification in P.L. 112-95, Sec. 336. The FAA cannot reliably estimate how frequently users submit data through the app.

7. Special circumstances.

There are no special circumstances that would require this collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the points presented in 5 CFR section 1320.5(d)(2)(i)(viii).

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8:

Given the recent uptick in pilot reports of unmanned aircraft around airports, the FAA believes the immediate release of the B4UFLY app is necessary to help maintain the safety of the NAS. The FAA is requesting an emergency control number be issued for the beta test.

The FAA will publish a Federal Register Notice for public comment during the beta test of the app, once the agency is sure the electronic notification process is feasibly scalable.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents.

No payments or gifts were provided to respondents.

10. Assurance of confidentiality:

No assurance of confidentiality is provided.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information:

No sensitive information is collected.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested:

The beta test will involve no more than 1,000 users for 60 days. The FAA cannot reliably estimate how frequently users will submit data, as it is completely voluntary. Consultation with

testers has indicated submitting the data request form requires no longer than 90-120 seconds (approximately 0.025-0.033 hours) per respondent per submission.

If respondents choose to send data 3-5 times per week on average, the time burden for the beta test would be:

3-5 submissions/wk x 9 weeks = 27-45 submissions x 0.025 hours/submission =
0.675-1.125 hours/user x 1,000 users = 675-1,125 hours

For entry into the ROCIS system, FAA is using the high-end calculations of:

5 submissions/wk x 9 weeks = 45 submissions per user x 0.033 hours x 1,000 users = 1,485 hours.

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents.

There are no additional costs other than those described in question 12 above.

14. Estimate of cost to the Federal government.

During the beta test, there is no way to reliably estimate the cost to the federal government, because the FAA cannot reliably estimate how frequently users will submit data. As the data will not be provided to ATCTs to make real-time decisions during the beta test, it will likely be pulled and reported to analysts no more than bi-weekly. This should require no more than 1-2 hours weekly to technical support analysts, for 9 weeks.

1.5 hrs weekly x 9 weeks = 13.5 hours at \$60/hr = \$810

15. Explanation of program changes or adjustments.

This is a new collection activity, therefore it is a program change.

16. Publication of results of data collection.

Ultimately the FAA believes publishing the data received through the B4UFLY app will increase NAS safety by increasing public awareness of UAS operations nationally. The FAA will use the beta test to determine the best, scalable method for publishing this information when the B4UFLY app is made available to the general public.

17. Approval for not displaying the expiration date of OMB approval.

B4UFLY is not seeking approval to not display the expiration date.

18. Exceptions to certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.