FAA PROPOSES $1.9 MILLION CIVIL PENALTY AGAINST UAS OPERATOR

News / Airlines



FAA has proposed a **$1.9 million civil penalty** against Chicago-based SkyPan International for allegedly conducting “65 unauthorized commercial unmanned aircraft systems **(UAS)** flights over various locations in New York City and Chicago between March 21, 2012 and Dec. 15, 2014. The flights involved aerial photography. Of those, 43 flew in the highly restricted New York Class B airspace” without receiving an air traffic control clearance to access it, FAA said in a statement.

The agency called it “the largest civil penalty the FAA has proposed against a UAS operator for endangering the safety of our airspace.”

FAA said the 65 unauthorized operations took place “in some of our most congested airspace and heavily populated cities, violating airspace regulations and various operating rules,” it alleges.

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FAA administrator Michael Huerta said, “Flying unmanned aircraft in violation of the Federal Aviation Regulations is illegal and can be dangerous. We have the safest airspace in the world, and everyone who uses it must understand and observe our comprehensive set of rules and regulations.”

The FAA “further alleges that on all 65 flights, the aircraft lacked an airworthiness certificate and effective registration, and SkyPan did not have a Certificate of Waiver or Authorization for the operations.”

A SkyPan spokesperson told *ATW* in an emailed statement: “We have yet been able to review the civil case against SkyPan International. Until we are able to do so, we are unable to comment on it.”

SkyPan has 30 days after receiving the FAA’s enforcement letter to respond to the agency.

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