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Testimony on Senate Bill 701

Thank you, Chairman Strobel and Committee Members, for this opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 701, which standardizes rules for the operation of unmanned aircraft systems, also called unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which we commonly call drones.

Statutes need to be revised to keep up with developing technology and developing uses for technology. Who would have thought, just a few years ago, that drones would be used to deliver products to homes, inspect infrastructure, and study the environment. They're everywhere. In fact, drones were one of the most popular Christmas presents last month.

The most significant provision of the bill is to provide certainty for drone users, who would have difficulty navigating a patchwork of local ordinances. In doing so, we must consider what possible negative effects drone usage may have so that we can make consistent, appropriate restrictions. The goal is to protect privacy rights, protect public servants, and protect drone operators.

It is already illegal to operate a drone over correctional facilities or where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. This bill will also prohibit a number of uses that are of concern to government and citizens alike. Under the bill, drone operators cannot interfere with various emergency services. Drones cannot be used to stalk, harass, or violate restraining orders. Registered sex offenders cannot use drones to get around prohibitions placed on them. These restrictions are reasonable to protect public safety and standardized so that drone operators will be assured of consistency.

I have listened to a number of stakeholders in developing this legislation, and look forward to the testimony and questions today. A substitute amendment is being drafted to address concerns that have come up. This amendment will include a provision that drones may be used at correctional facilities with the permission of the warden, that drones can be used to carry out warrants, and that drones may be restricted near critical infrastructure in a declared state of emergency.

These simple changes will appropriately update the statutes and provide fairness and clarity for hobbyists, industry, and justice. Thank you again for your consideration of SB 701. Sen. Feyen and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



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To: The Senate Committee on Government Operations, Technology, and
Consumer Protection
From: Sen. Dan Feyen
Re: Senate Bill 701

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing today.

This bill assures certainty for drone owners and operators with consistent state-wide regulations concerning drones. Drone owners and operators are protected from patchwork regulation and prohibition by political subdivisions.

Protections for public safety are expanded by prohibiting the use of drones to interfere with law enforcement and other first responders, prohibiting the use of drones to stalk or violating restraining orders, and prohibiting use by registered sex offenders for certain actions. Convictions carry a forfeiture of up to \$5,000.

Additionally, the bill removes a cumbersome requirement for court reporting to the FAA, as that requirement is not federally mandated.

Thank you for your time today. I welcome any questions you may have.

Jon Elliott, Owner MKE Drones

SB 701

As the owner of a Milwaukee based drone service company I am in favor of this law as written. What we need is a unified set of rules for flying UAS across the entire state, not a patch work of laws that every drone operator has to seek out for each city.

By example, people in Wisconsin drive their cars and don't need to know a different set of laws based on which city or town they are in - its all a unified set of rules. Drones should be the same.

More and more we are seeing towns decide they are afraid of this drones without even being aware of what this technology can or cannot do, and the benefits it can bring. Then, in a knee jerk reaction they pass a poorly worded law that either goes against federal pre-emption, or severely limits what can be done using this new technology. This in turn harms not just people who simply want to enjoy drones for fun, but also stifles business like myself who are simply trying to do work to keep a customer happy. What we need is more education on the legal use of drones as it stands under the federal law. Instead of passing poorly written laws, municipalities should consider holding safety education classes on drones to help people understand them better, not fear them.

This law as written keeps Wisconsin open to the use of drone technology, and put us on par with states like Michigan who already have a similar law on their books. Thank you for your time.