



Support HB 2789: Reasonable Regulations on Drones

Domestic drones are increasingly being acquired by government agencies such as police departments. But Washington has no regulations on how drones may be used by the government—and in particular what protections need to be in place to protect individual privacy. HB 2789 would put reasonable drone regulations in place—ensuring that Washingtonians can enjoy the benefits of this useful new technology, allowing government agencies to use them for legitimate purposes, and ensuring that the policy debate happens *before* large numbers of drones fly over our state.

Drone Technology is a Game Changer

Drones are highly mobile unmanned aerial vehicles. Previous methods of surveillance, such as fixed camera networks or manned aerial surveillance, were large, expensive, and limited in their scope, but drones have changed the game. While they have many legitimate uses, such as for search-and-rescue operations or barricaded hostage situations, they also give the government new capabilities to engage in extensive, cheap surveillance. They are far cheaper than manned flights and can be equipped with surveillance technology, facial recognition, or even guns. And because it is the government doing the surveillance, this issue goes far beyond expectations of privacy in public places—it is about an individual's right to go about one's business free of spying from one's own government.

Our Lawmakers Need to Regulate Drones Now

Federal government funding means that money is available for local law enforcement agencies to buy drones and other technology, often before they know what they will use them for. And a rapidly growing domestic drone industry is extensively marketing drones. But public concern about drones has led to a flurry of state-level legislative activity—drone regulations have been proposed in 43 states, enacted in 9 states, and are still active in 5 states.

Our legislature needs to establish a statewide floor of regulations for law enforcement use of drones. Clear regulations will ensure that our state benefits from drone technology while addressing public concern about drones invading law-abiding residents' privacy.

This Bill Contains Reasonable, Common Sense Limits

HB 2789 does not ban drones—it simply ensures that the policy debate around them happens before the drones are actually deployed, and set reasonable, common sense limits on their most invasive uses. The bill requires local or state government approval before an agency acquires drones. Law enforcement can use drones during emergencies, and for missions that don't involve collecting personal information or routine regulatory enforcement, but otherwise would need a warrant. Exemptions included in the bill would allow useful operations such as exercises over military bases, fire control, search and rescue, or research operations, among others. Personal data would be deleted unless criminal activity is shown. Agencies would report how and for what purpose their drones are being used. At its heart, the bill seeks to prohibit suspicionless fishing expeditions by government agencies that use drones to conduct generalized surveillance with no suspicion of wrongdoing.

These basic, common sense guidelines on drone use would boost public confidence that drone technology is not being misused while embracing the technology's benefits. This is good for the aerospace industry and residents alike.

Drone Legislation Has Broad Bipartisan Support

Concern over drones crosses party lines—in Washington and elsewhere in the country, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are lining up to regulate drones. This bill has significant bipartisan support. We urge lawmakers to pass legislation to provide bright lines for drone use, rather than leaving drones to proliferate unregulated. Support HB 2789!