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Testimony on Assembly Bill 855

Thank you, Chairman Spiros and Committee Members, for this opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 855, 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. Some want to access restricted areas to inspect infrastructure. Others want to make sure that search warrants are obtained to use drones for

investigations. Each concern is under consideration, and I look forward to additional testimony that will be presented today. Following this hearing, I expect to introduce an amendment to make sure we are protecting the interests of all stakeholders.

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 AB 855. As Senator Feyen was unable to join us due to a previous commitment, I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Department of Administration
Intergovernmental Relations Division

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Sharon Robinson
Director of Administration

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Director of Intergovernmental Relations

City of Milwaukee Written Testimony on Assembly Bill 855 Relating to: the operation and regulation of unmanned aircraft and providing a penalty
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
January 25, 2018

The City of Milwaukee supports Assembly Bill 855 on the condition of amending the bill to allow political subdivisions to impose additional regulations and restrictions of drone usage.

The City supports providing overall statewide policy governing this emerging technology, but given the many unknowns and potential broad scope of the abilities of drone technology, the City is concerned about the current language in the bill restricting municipalities from further regulating drone usage. It is important to ensure the ability to safeguard critical local and regional infrastructure where public safety and public health may be compromised by allowing privately operated drones, particularly weaponized drones, to be utilized. The City supports allowing political subdivisions additional flexibility to impose the necessary local controls to ensure the protection of military bases, water, power and electrical utilities, hazardous materials plants, emergency medical facilities, and sewage treatment centers.

The City of Milwaukee supports Assembly Bill 855 with the proposed amendment described above. Please do not hesitate to contact Danielle Decker at 414-286-5589 or ddecke@milwaukee.gov for further information.

