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To: The Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
From: Sen. Dan Feyen
Re: Senate Bill 237

Hello, Chairman Wanggaard and committee members. Thank you for taking time today to hear testimony on Senate Bill 237.

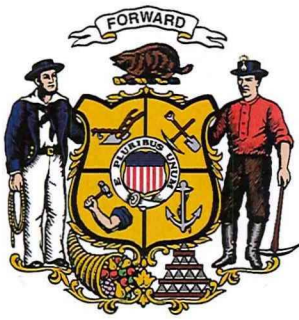
In 2015, Wisconsin Act 318 banned the operation of drones over correctional facilities. The Department of Corrections continues to remain fully in support of this ban, but the law unfortunately made it illegal for the DOC to fly drones over their facilities as well. This bill corrects this oversight.

Giving the Department of Corrections the ability to fly drones will allow greater visibility in the open air areas of correctional facilities. This will increase sightlines and security and allow eyes and ears into places that might otherwise be inaccessible.

In addition, drones can be used for more than just security. As technology improves the department would like to implement and expand their drone program to include maintenance and other uses. This makes drones a very effective tool to be used at the department's disposal.

Senate Amendment 1 was drafted in consultation with both the Department of Corrections, Badger State Sheriffs' Association, and the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association. This amendment clarifies that the DOC has the ability to authorize drone use over their facilities and the County Sheriff has the ability to authorize drone use over county owned facilities.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. With that, I am happy to answer any questions the committee has.



Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Kevin A. Carr

**Testimony for AB211/SB237 – The use of drones over Department of Corrections’ property
Assembly Committee on Corrections
Wednesday, April 28, 2021**

Good Afternoon Chairman Schraa and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of AB211/SB237, that would provide express statutory authority for the Department of Corrections (DOC) to fly its own drones over its own properties.

I am Tommy Balistreri, the Chief Information Officer for the DOC, a FAA Part 107 Licensed Commercial Drone Pilot and a member of the state’s Drone Network, a branch of the Air Coordination Group. I have been with the DOC for more than eight years, and in this time founded the DOC’s Drone/Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Program with the intent of establishing subject matter experts on the use and mitigation of drones in a corrections environment.

2015 Act 318 (AB670) added language to the Statutes to prohibit anyone from operating a drone over a correctional institution or be subject to a fine of up to \$5000 for violating this prohibition. The intent of the Act was to provide additional protections to DOC against illegal drone activity. Our legal experts determined that the language was so effective it also prohibited DOC from operating any drone over our own facilities. As a result, the DOC is seeking a correction to the language to expressly allow the DOC or a DOC-authorized party to operate drones over any of its facilities, while maintaining the prohibition for non-DOC authorized drone activity.

As the cost and technology of operating drones becomes more affordable, manageable and reliable, the DOC would like to study the opportunity to implement the use of drones for facilities maintenance and security purposes. However, we cannot further study and review this opportunity without having the expressed authority to do so. We hope to begin utilizing this technology by surveying radio and water towers, inspecting buildings and structures, and more quickly locating steam pipe leaks at our numerous facilities. With the passage of this bill, the DOC would also be able to review and develop policies for the use of drone technology for security purposes as well.

I want to thank Representative Callahan and Senator Feyen, and the other co-sponsors for agreeing to take the lead on this bill. I’m happy to take any question you may have. Thank you for your time.



To: Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
From: Badger State Sheriffs' Association (BSSA)
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association (WS&DSA)
Date: April 29, 2021
RE: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 237

BSSA and WS&DSA submit these comments in support of SB 237. As way of background, BSSA is a statewide organization representing all of Wisconsin's 72 Sheriffs. WS&DSA is a statewide organization representing over 1,000 members, including Sheriffs, Deputies, and jail officers. BSSA and WS&DSA have a joint legislative committee and work closely on public safety issues of concern to our members.

Our organizations support SB 237 as amended by Senate Amendment 1. Amendment 1 clarifies the authority of the Sheriff to operate drones over the county jails. As Sheriffs, it is our statutory duty to ensure the operation of our county jails provide safe and secure measures for both the inmates and the staff. Managing the security requires utilizing a variety of tools – including technology like drones. Drones can assist with the monitoring of disturbances inside and outside of a jail, as well as crowds outside of the institution. Drones can also be useful in aiding in the search for escaped inmates and can be customized to provide other maintenance tasks.

Current law strictly limits the use of drones over the state's jails and prisons. Limits on the use of drones over correctional facilities is still needed, but this bill, as amended, provides a balance between ensuring the use of drones to assist in the management of the jails, while still prohibiting the use of drones without the express approval of the Sheriff.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this commonsense bill.