



Fact Sheet: Support passage of “drone bill” – HB 5452 in special session or veto session in the fall of 2022

Background

The original “Illinois Freedom from Drone Surveillance Act” passed in Illinois in 2013. Since then, the public use of drones has increased substantially. Drones are now regularly used by hobbyists, news media, construction managers, Realtors and others -- and for the inspection of bridges, water towers and power lines. Law enforcement can use drones to photograph accident scenes and crime scenes, to search for missing persons, and *after an emergency is under way*, but cannot proactively observe a community event such as a concert or parade.

Highland Park example – July 4, 2022, parade

The Highland Park incident is a clear example where law enforcement and the entire community may have benefited from more common-sense language in state law. The law in its current form prohibits law enforcement from using drones in a proactive, preventative manner for community events.

How HB 5452 will make communities safer

This legislation began as an initiative of the Aurora Police Department, and it has since united with other law enforcement agencies, various municipalities, and the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police into a coalition seeking changes to an outdated law. The recommendations are limited to specific situations that would provide proactive and/or preventative benefits for public safety.

Summary of Major Proposed Changes:

- Updates definition of “special event”
 - Definition taken from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
 - Permits the use of a drone by a law enforcement agency at a special event to prepare for or observe crowd size, density, and movement; assess public safety staffing; or oversee the general safety of the participants.
 - If a special event is occurring on private property, use of a drone must be authorized by the owners or organizers prior to flight.
- Provides that a law enforcement agency may use a drone to respond to Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) dispatched calls for service, when the primary purpose for the response is to locate or assist victims, or both, identify offenders, and to guide emergency response.
- Allows an evaluation of traffic flow around schools when planned in advance and authorized by the school administrator, with advance notification to parents.
- Provides transparency because information data on drone usage would be subject to the disclosure and exception to disclosure provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.