



Increasing Efficiency and Public Safety through the Use of Drones

In 2013, the Florida Legislature passed comprehensive drone legislation specifying how law enforcement could use drones. In order to ensure the privacy of the public, the law required law enforcement to first obtain a search warrant in order to use a drone. However, situations have arose over the last five years that necessitate another look at laws related to drones and how they can be used to create efficiencies and enhance public safety.

When dangerous situations occur, law enforcement must quickly assess and respond in a way that will minimize harm to the public and to the deputies deployed. Drones can improve the safety of all involved if deployed along side the responding deputies. This bill would allow law enforcement to use drones to gain an important aerial advantage when dealing with hostage situations, barricaded subjects, wildfires or other disasters, or even during crowd control and traffic management.

In addition, there are also situations in which the use of drones can save a law enforcement agency time, money and the use of personnel. Use of a drone for aerial crime scene photography over public property is a safe and cost-effective option to eliminate the need for law enforcement to operate an aircraft. In addition, the use of a drone provides important and valuable “same day” crime scene processing, to expedite a thorough and complete investigation. This bill would allow law enforcement to use a drone for processing a crime scene in those instances after a crime has been committed on public property. Using drones in this limited, defined manner would expedite and enhance crime scene processing, preserving the scene for future review, investigation, and prosecution.

Current drone legislation must be expanded to allow law enforcement to provide for more efficient and effective deployment and use of emergency personnel and equipment in the case of natural and human-made disasters and to improve officer safety in certain high-danger and tactical situations.

Support HB 75 by Rep. Yarborough

