

Testimony of Peter Sachs, Esq.

Drone Law Journal

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**SB-148: AN ACT CONCERNING THE WEAPONIZATION OF DRONES
BASED ON A PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE STUDY.**

Members of the Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to speak before you again today. My name is Peter Sachs. I have been a Connecticut attorney for 22 years, a manned commercial helicopter pilot for 33 years and I now fly drones. I am the author of Drone Law Journal, considered the definitive guide to current drone law. I am also a captain with the Branford CT Fire Department, and in 2014, I had the honor of piloting the first firefighting drone flight in history.

Since 2013, I have been one of the nation's leading drone advocates, encouraging the safe and responsible use of drones and discouraging state, local and federal efforts from passing unnecessary and invalid laws that would prevent drones from being what they are destined to be — devices with countless uses that make our lives safer, less expensive and more efficient.

I am pleased to be able to say that Connecticut's legislature, and in particular the Program Review and Investigations and Public Safety and Security Committees devoted an inordinate amount of time and energy last year to determine exactly what a state may and may not do with respect to regulating flight and airspace. The committees have a unique understanding that most states lack, and I commend all of you.

Second, I would suggest that, in accordance with discretion afforded the legislature in C.G.S. Section 2-32, the effective date of this bill be July 1st rather than October 1st.

Drones are flown with more frequency during good weather, and more good weather exists beginning on July 1st than exists beginning October 1st. Moreover, the sooner reckless behavior (as was twice displayed by the young man in Clinton) can be made felonious, the better.

I believe that this bill, once combined with the provisions of House Bill 5274 would create a solid yet limited basis of drone regulation in Connecticut that would prohibit the conduct of bad actors without creating any barriers for the innovative good actors, which represent the vast majority of drone operators. It would also not attempt to regulate in any areas that are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States government.

I thank you for your time, and I will be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

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Amend CGS Title 15, Section 15-41 to read:

1 **Section 15-41 - Regulations and standards.**

2

3 (a) The commissioner may perform such acts, issue and amend such orders, and
4 make and amend such reasonable general or special regulations and procedure
5 and establish such minimum standards, consistent with the provisions of this
6 chapter, as he deems necessary or appropriate, and which are commensurate
7 with and for the purpose of protecting and insuring the general public interest
8 and safety, the safety of persons receiving instruction concerning, or operating,
9 using or traveling in, aircraft, and of persons and property on land or water, and
10 to develop and promote aeronautics in this state. No regulation of the
11 commissioner shall apply to airports or other air navigation facilities owned by
12 the federal government within this state.

13

14 **(b) The authority to regulate the operation of privately owned and**
15 **operated unmanned aerial vehicles, as defined in Section 15-34, is**
16 **reserved exclusively to the State. No local government or political**
17 **subdivision thereof, and no state or local agency may prohibit,**
18 **restrict, or otherwise regulate the operation of any privately owned**
19 **and operated unmanned aerial vehicles, and any such existing**
20 **prohibitions, restrictions and regulations are superseded and**
21 **invalidated retroactively, as of the effective date of this Section.**

22

23 **(c) This section does not affect Federal preemption of State law.**