CONNECTICUT AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Testimony Regarding Senate Bill No. 148, An Act Concerning the Weaponization of Drones Based on a Program Review and Investigations Committee Study.

Kevin A. Dillon, A.A.E.
Executive Director
Connecticut Airport Authority

Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee
February 29, 2016

Dear Senator Fonfara, Representative Carpino, Senator Kissel, Representative Mushinsky, and distinguished members of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee,

My name is Kevin Dillon, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA). **I am submitting this testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 148, An Act Concerning the Weaponization of Drones Based on a Program Review and Investigations Committee Study.**

As the regulatory body for aeronautics in the State of Connecticut, the CAA is responsible for working to ensure the safety of Connecticut aviation in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules. In February 2015, the FAA issued proposed rules to integrate non-recreational small unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) into the National Airspace System and President Obama released a presidential memorandum outlining steps to work towards providing transparency, accountability, and privacy protections in UAS use at the federal agency level. The FAA also recently initiated a new unmanned aircraft systems registration program, effective December 21, 2015. The CAA respectfully requests that the Committee take these ongoing developments into account when moving forward with potential drone use regulations due to the potential conflicts that could arise between state and federal law.

The drone industry is rapidly evolving, and it holds great potential for both recreational use and commercial applications. However, this technology must be used responsibly to ensure safety in our skies. While the CAA is pleased that the Committee has tackled the issue of ensuring responsible drone use in Connecticut, the CAA is concerned that potential unintended consequences could arise as a result of this legislation. By creating a new definition for unmanned aerial vehicles and pulling such devices out of the definition of aircraft, it would effectively exempt drones from any state registration requirements. As the FAA continues to alter and defend its new registration program, the CAA is concerned by the blanket, open-ended exemption from state registration requirements. The CAA believes that such registration is a useful tool to ensure responsible use and accountability for those utilizing this technology. While the CAA can understand the need for a potential short-term moratorium to review the effects of federal rules, we do not believe that a full UAS registration exemption would be an appropriate course of action at this time. The CAA suggests instead considering a shorter, one- or two-year moratorium on aircraft registration requirements to allow time to assess the impacts of federal regulations and help ensure safe flight in the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please feel free to contact my office at (860) 292-2054 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Dillon

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Executive Director
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