

HB 2780 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Specifies that fire departments may operate unmanned aircraft systems and acquire and disclose information through their operation for purposes of emergency incident response. Provides that laws prohibiting certain operation of unmanned aircraft systems over privately-owned premises and certain critical infrastructure facilities do not apply to the use of such systems by fire departments. Stipulates that laws authorizing action against the operator of unmanned aerial systems under certain circumstances does not apply to such systems operated for purposes of emergency incident response by law enforcement agencies or fire departments.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Extends authority to use unmanned aerial systems to emergency medical services providers.

BACKGROUND:

Unmanned aerial systems (UAS), sometimes referred to as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones, are small, flying devices that can be operated remotely. Modern drones can carry high-resolution cameras, or cameras capable of detection in the infrared spectrum, or can be designed to carry and deliver small cargo loads. While drones have become popular for commercial and recreational uses, there are a number of ways that fire departments use drones in the field. These include: assessment of risk and danger; detection of thermal hot spots; rapid response and information gathering; finding trapped victims; making emergency deliveries in disaster situations, such as automated external defibrillators; pre-fire planning; conducting investigations; and creation of training materials.