



AUVSI CASCADE CHAPTER
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Oregon Senate Committee On Natural Resources,

Attn.: Senator Jeff Golden,
900 Court Jason St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Proposed Rules Regulating the Takeoff and Landing of Drones in and Around Oregon Parks, Wildlife Areas and the Ocean Shore

Dear Members of the Senate Committee On Natural Resources:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. We are reaching out today to express our opposition for SB 812. It is important that representatives from the public and private industry work together to foster the growth and regulation of this new industry, and the proposed amendment does not seem to have utilized this approach. As an organization that represents member companies who rely on this technology in Oregon and Washington, we oppose the proposed amendment to ORS 837 and would like to offer our expertise and guidance in moving forward with laws and rules that affect the industry.

The Cascade Chapter of the Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) is the largest chapter of the international association that represents the uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS, otherwise known as “drones”) industry in the states of Oregon and Washington.

Our chapter, composed of more than 400 industry leaders, represents a total impact of \$3 billion and 10,000 full-time and part-time jobs in the region we represent, according to a quick estimate prepared by Dr. David Laning, principal engineer and solutions architect at Insitu. We would appreciate more time to consider the proposed rules and provide additional input to aid the commission.

Moving forward, we hope that State Legislature and the AUVSI Cascade Chapter can establish meaningful communications for the future. In the short time we have had, we have conducted an initial review of the proposed rules and have noted some serious concerns. We are eager to work constructively with you to improve this rule while allowing all the benefits this industry has to offer. We look forward to the opportunity to work with your staff to improve the current draft.

On the following pages, you will find our specific concerns and suggestions that have emerged from our initial review.

Unacceptable Restrictions on Emergency Services Providers

The proposed new rule does not exempt public safety agencies from its scope. In an emergency - fire, flood, search and rescue operation, etc., - there is no time to go through a special use permitting process. One likely and unintended effect of the proposed rule, is that emergency service providers and public safety agencies operations requiring take offs and landings in prohibited areas, including training will be all but foreclosed. This may deprive the public of critical emergency support. The basic problem is that the proposed rule is unclear about what is intended to be exempted and is too narrow to allow emergency services providers to protect the public.

Important lifesaving reconnaissance, training, and other services that drones provide start with take offs and landings where the mission is to occur. Those important operations must be allowed, and the proposed SB 812 must be clarified.

There can be no dispute that there are times when only a drone, which designed to take off and land reasonably close to its mission area, can provide the required emergency service. Sometimes the services are provided by a private nonprofit, and from time to time the operators must engage in training take offs and landings to maximize their capability to do their work.

Scope of the Proposed Law are Too Broad

In the not-too-distant future, UAS operations will include electric vertical take off and landing vehicles (eVTOL) that will autonomously transport people and property to their destinations, including parks. The proposal would allow local jurisdictions to foreclose this important transportation option which will rely upon public park parking lots and eVTOL landing pads in parks. Because eVTOL is likely to be inexpensive and efficient, it can be expected that historically disadvantaged populations who might not otherwise have the luxury of being transported to public parks, would be among the primary users. Therefore, the restriction might inadvertently and disproportionately affect such disadvantaged populations.

Public Park Fliers Include STEM Kids

Youth are among the enthusiastic adopters of UAS technology. Many youth live in dense, urban environments and their only opportunity to perform UAS operations is their neighborhood parks. The proposed legislation risks foreclosing important STEM interests for youth. Oregon should be encouraging our young people to responsibly use the technology. Not foreclose it.

Destabilizing UAS Amendments

SB 812 is one of four proposed legislative changes to ORS 837 this session. One in the Senate and three in the House. It is our belief that these proposed changes are not coordinated. This is evidenced by four different topics and changes to ORS 837. This lack of collaboration causes regulatory challenges and lack of true clarity for what the intended UAS laws were originally intended to cover. The lack of clarity and intent will have a significant impact on the UAS industry and could potentially affect future economic development in our state, innovation from the industry. This could create an



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untenable, destabilizing operations environment for recreational, professional, experimental, and public safety uses of UAS.

A Patchwork Of Drone Rules And Laws

If SB 812 becomes law, there is a strong likelihood that regulation, use and operability will become inconsistent from city to city, within Oregon's 292 cities, variable from county to county and within Oregon's 36 counties. This risks the creation of an untenable patchwork of regulation regarding appropriate sites for UAS operations take off and landings. Maintaining the FAA and the State of Oregon, as the sole authorities to regulate UAS operations promotes the public interest by maintaining a consistent body of law and regulations that must be consulted for operations. If SB 812 were to become law, there is no mechanism for the state, counties, and cities to share information so that users in the National Airspace would know where they can or cannot fly. SB 812 does not promote collaboration by local government entities and the state to make this information known. The patchwork of laws that would result would simply be untenable for recreational, professional, experimental, and public safety uses for UAS.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the proposed rule unnecessarily constrains important publicly beneficial uses of UAS technology without corresponding public benefits. AUVSI Cascade encourages this committee to reconvene the UAS Task Force to discuss concerns about the technology and reasonable solutions. However, eroding historic federal and state control over UAS operations is unwise. Thank you for your consideration.

Delivered for your consideration on behalf of the AUVSI Cascade Chapter Board of Directors.

Very Truly Yours,

Jeff Pricher
Vice President, Cascade Chapter of AUVSI

CC: Scott Shtofman AUVSI (National)
Cascade Chapter Board, AUVSI