



ASSOCIATION FOR UNCREWED VEHICLE SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

CASCADE CHAPTER

11160 SW Durham Lane, Suite 7

McMinnville, Oregon 97128

Patrick Sherman

lucidity@roswellflighttestcrew.com

ADVOCATE. EDUCATE. CONNECT.

AUVSI Cascade Government Affairs Update

May 15, 2023 | Patrick Sherman

First up, the bad news... As regards Oregon Senate Bill 812, which would allow local governments to prohibit the take-off and landing of drones from public parks within their jurisdiction, the bill has passed both the House and Senate and now only awaits the signature of Governor Tina Kotek to become law. This development has occurred despite widespread opposition to the bill, from your AUVSI Cascade Chapter and the Academy of Model Aeronautics, among many others who offered testimony.

The final version put in place exemptions for *some* professional operations, such as those by public utilities and government bodies, to include firefighters and other first responders – and allows an affirmative defense in an instance where a drone makes an emergency landing in a park where operations are otherwise prohibited.

However, the bill leaves at risk many worthwhile activities that involve drones, including private commercial operations and recreational flying. On this last point, we seemed to have found some support from Representative Lucetta Elmer of District 24, who wrote in part, “Senate Bill 812-(A) represents a missed opportunity. Model aviation is a creative outlet than can be used to inspire young people to seek out careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics...” She goes on to argue that while local control is an important goal, the bill establishes no due process standard for the formulation of local bans and does not require citizen input before putting them into place.

As mentioned, the governor has yet to sign the bill. If you have an in with her office, now is the time to use it.

Next up, House Bill 3257, which would have established a working group to consider how advanced air mobility (AAM) platforms, such as autonomous aerial taxis, would be deployed in Oregon, has failed to advance, according to its chief sponsor, Representative Jeff Helfrich of District 52. Given the small-bore nature of the proposal – establishing a committee of experts to make recommendations, to receive minimal administrative support from the Oregon Department of Aviation, which would sunset in 2024 – it’s had to imagine the reason it failed to advance. Some of the aircraft in question have been developed here in Oregon, but unfortunately, the legislature did not see fit to promote the work of volunteers who would seek to see them deployed here.

Finally, a bit of good news: House Bill 2688, which would have expanded upon the threats of civil litigation against drone operators currently embodied in Oregon Revised Statutes 837.370 – and which would seem to run afoul of the FAA’s authority over the National Airspace System (NAS) – is going nowhere fast. The last public action taken regarding the bill was a public hearing held on February 21, when several members of the AUVSI Cascade Board testified against it. Its chief sponsor, Representative Mark Owens of District 60, stated at that time he hoped the bill would be amended to re-establish the state legislature’s drone working group.

We checked back with Mark Owen regarding that opportunity, and he said that his own effort was being merged with one by Senator Floyd Prozanski of District 4. There have been no further developments regarding this possibility, but we remain actively engaged on behalf of the industry.