



December 9, 2024

The Honorable August Pfluger
Chairman
Subcommittee on
Counterterrorism, Law
Enforcement, and Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Carlos Gimenez
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation
and Maritime Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Seth Magaziner
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism,
Law Enforcement, and Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Shri Thanedar
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation
and Maritime Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Pfluger and Gimenez, and Ranking Members Magaziner and Thanedar:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce (“Chamber”) respectfully submits the following statement for the record for the House Homeland Security Subcommittee Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence and Transportation Maritime’s joint hearing titled “Safeguarding the Homeland from Unmanned Aerial Systems.” We appreciate the Committees ongoing efforts to address the public safety threats posed by illicit unmanned aircraft, or drones, to our nation’s critical infrastructure, sporting and entertainment events, and airports.

Drones provide substantial economic, social, and national security benefits to the United States and it is crucial that we take a global lead in this innovative technology. However, the potential misuse and illicit use of drones presents major public safety, national security and economic concerns. These concerns include endangering the flying public, disrupting major sporting and entertainment events, enabling criminal and terrorism threats to public safety, and espionage of our most advanced critical infrastructure facilities. These risks are not hypothetical, given the number of unauthorized drone intrusions, close calls, and use of drones globally for malicious purposes.¹

¹ Sara Ruberg, *Man Planned to Use Drone With Explosive to Attack Substation, U.S. Says*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Nov. 4, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/04/us/columbia-energy-facility-weapon-mass-destruction.html>; James Tutton, *FBI Investigates After Large Drones Seen Flying Near Military Base and Trump’s Bedminster Golf Club*, WFTV9 (Dec. 4, 2024),

<https://www.wftv.com/news/local/fbi-investigates-after-large-drones-seen-flying-near-military-base-trumps-bedminster-golf-club/UU7NO62Y6VAZNCMIBN3GD7XYT4/>; Gordon Lubold, Lara Seligman, and Aruna Viswanatha, *Mystery Drones Swarmed a U.S. Military Base for 17 Days. The Pentagon Is Stumped*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (Oct. 12, 2024), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/drones->

Presently, four federal agencies have the legal authority to utilize counter-drone detection and mitigation technologies to protect certain sensitive facilities and operations. While we support the missions of those federal agencies to use counter-drone technologies, those federal agencies do not have sufficient resources and adequate legal authorities to fully protect the full scope of sensitive facilities and operations. Congress can remedy this issue by responsibly expanding detection and mitigation authorities to other key federal government agencies and functions that currently do not possess these authorities, detection authorities for private sector entities, and limited mitigation authority for state and local enforcement through a pilot program. Expanding the aperture of entities that possess counter-drone authorities conserves limited federal resources and empowers federal agencies to prioritize protecting the most sensitive assets and operations.

We recognize the complexities presented by employing counter-drone technologies, and support placing reasonable and tailored guardrails on expanded counter-drone use to address important policy goals including protecting privacy and civil rights, ensuring aviation safety, addressing spectrum interference, continuing federal oversight of the national airspace, and allowing lawful commercial activity. However, policymakers should ensure that any counter-drone framework minimizes red tape for law enforcement and the private sector while also being practical to implement, otherwise, the benefits of expanded detection and mitigation authorities will not be realized.

Ensuring public safety and the security of the national airspace is an important priority for the U.S. Chamber, and a tailored counter-drone framework plays a significant role in achieving that objective. We urge you to act on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Tom Quadman
Senior Vice President
Economic Policy
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

[military-pentagon-defense-331871f4](https://www.military-pentagon-defense-331871f4); *Russian Drones Attack Critical Infrastructure in Ukraine's West, Air Force Says*, REUTERS (Dec. 2, 2024), <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-drone-attack-leaves-parts-ukraines-ternopil-without-power-military-says-2024-12-03/>; UAS Sightings Report, Federal Aviation Administration (accessed Dec. 9, 2024), https://www.faa.gov/uas/resources/public_records/uas_sightings_report.