



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Board of Supervisors



Date: August 29, 2016
Board Meeting Date: September 6, 2016
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Don Horsley and Supervisor Carole Groom
Subject: Study Session: Review of Legislation Relating to Drones

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and provide input on options to address the use of drone aircraft in San Mateo County.

BACKGROUND:

The increasingly complex and sophisticated technology that is creating more and more specialized drone products has also generated an increasing number of concerns for local, regional and national government agencies.

In San Mateo County, with its large international airport (SFO) and two smaller general aviation airports, there have been public comments and questions brought to the Board of Supervisors.

The purpose of this Study Session is to have the County Counsel outline what the legal landscape for drone regulation is and to seek input and guidance from the Board of Supervisors.

Various departments within the County have already been assessing how to address private drone use affecting County operations and interests, as well as considering whether drone equipment can be utilized by the County to improve services, safety, and other public interests.

From private use on an operator's own private property to drone use above public and other private property to large-scale commercial use, the flying of drone equipment presents a variety of unique challenges and opportunities. While it is not the purpose of today's Study Session to answer every question, it is the intention to offer a sound background and up-to-date information on what is actually possible on a local level given the ever-increasing FAA involvement on a national one.

DISCUSSION:

Presentations will be made by the County Counsel Office, (David Silberman, Sandra Nierenberg); the San Carlos Airport (Chris St. Peter), and the County Parks Department (Marlene Finley).

The San Francisco International Airport Public Information Office has also actively been discussing drone issues with FAA authorities and County staff, and provided the following background on the topic. SFO has expressed interest in being included in future local drone discussions:

- Since FAA reporting began in 2014, SFO has experienced 11 reports of drones by pilots; seven in 2015, four in 2016. In all cases, no evasive action was required on the part of the reporting pilots.
- SFO's [Rules & Regulations](#) prohibit drones from taking off or landing on airport property
- SFO also issued an [executive directive](#) prohibiting the use of drones inside Airport facilities, and prohibiting the sale of drones by Airport retailers
- SFO partnered with the FAA to create a Public Service Announcement [video](#) about drone safety rules, which aired in the terminal areas prior to holiday 2015 travel
- SFO has also participated in aviation industry working groups to provide greater definition to U.S. airport on drone policy matters

FISCAL IMPACT:

None