



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Chad R. Perkins

POB 251
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426
Residence: (207) 279-0927
Fax: (207) 305-4907
chad.perkins@legislature.maine.gov

8 Feb 26

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: LD 2157, An Act to Prohibit the Unauthorized Use of Drones on or over the Premises of Correctional Facilities and Jails

Committee Chair Senator Beebe-Center, Committee Chair Representative Hasenfus and my fellow members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

Thank you for allowing me to bring forth my bill, An Act to Prohibit the Unauthorized Use of Drones on or over the Premises of Correctional Facilities and Jails.

Drones have become a popular and ubiquitous tool in our society and, like almost any tool, they can be used for both benign and nefarious purposes. One of those nefarious purposes is to deliver contraband to inmates into correctional facilities. Another is to perform surveillance and reconnaissance on correctional facilities to probe for weak spots in the security infrastructure.

A report by ABC News, just this last December, highlighted the fact that the use of drones in smuggling drugs, cellphones and weapons into correctional facilities has sky-rocketed and become 'a daily occurrence'. It also highlighted the fact that there are almost no cost-effective countermeasures for bringing down a drone over a correctional facility. And while there was just 1 report of drones being used in federal prisons to deliver contraband in 2015, there were 23 such reports in 2018, 57 in 2019, and 479 in 2024. The State of Georgia alone is now reporting that they had 70 such incidents just in one month last year. Even here in Maine, DOC has reported the use of drones over the Long Creek facility.

House District 31

Atkinson Township, Brownville, Dover-Foxcroft, Lake View Plantation, Medford, Milo, Orneville Township, & Southeast Piscataquis

To make matters worse, drones are getting cheaper and the technology is getting better. They have better command and control systems, including pre-programmed flight software, they are lighter, have longer flight durations and can carry more weight. There are drones available now that can easily carry between 50 and 225 pounds. And their use in criminal activity has risen in proportion with their capabilities.

Currently, while there are restrictions for operating drones (and other aircraft) over certain federal prisons that are part of a designated Air Defense Identification Zones (ADIZ) under 14 CFR Part 99, and there are Temporary Flight Restrictions on a limited number of certain 'high risk' federal prisons (see DOJ OIG Audit 20-104), there is no general prohibition for operating a drone over a correctional facility under 14 CFR Part 107. This hampers the ability for prosecutors, corrections officials and law enforcement to effectively battle the rampant use of drones over correctional facilities.

In response to this lack of federal regulation, 13 states have passed various laws restricting the use of drones over or around prisons and other correctional facilities (Arizona, Iowa, Louisiana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin).

LD 2157 would simply make it unlawful to either deliver or attempt to deliver contraband to a prison using a drone or to operate a drone over of a correctional facility, or to land a drone at the facility or to operate it from the facility. Exceptions are made in the bill, of course, for drones operated by corrections personnel and law enforcement personnel using the drone lawfully in the performance of their duties.

LD 2157 is a common sense solution to a growing problem and I encourage the committee to support it with a vote of 'Ought To Pass'. I thank you for your time and will gladly answer any questions to my ability.

Respectfully,



Rep. Chad R. Perkins
District 31

CF:
Committee Chair Senator Beebe-Center
Committee Chair Representative Hasenfus
CJPS Committee Members

House District 31

*Atkinson Township, Brownville, Dover-Foxcroft, Lake View Plantation, Medford, Milo, Orneville
Township, & Southeast Piscataquis*