

MOTION

The rapid proliferation of Civilian Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), or “drones,” requires a clear and enforceable local regulatory framework to ensure public safety. While the majority of drone operations are recreational and lawful, the lack of enforceable local guidelines makes it challenging to manage unauthorized or reckless flights during major events or near sensitive infrastructure, such as water and power facilities. As Los Angeles prepares to host major international events, it is crucial to improve our airspace safety and coordination.

Currently, Los Angeles Municipal Code 56.31 regulates the operation of drones in our municipality’s airspace. However, the City Attorney has confirmed that those laws are likely preempted by federal laws regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration. In fact, the Los Angeles Police Department suspended enforcement of the existing ordinance, so as to avoid a constitutional challenge.

As such, the City lacks a municipal framework and enforcement tools to address drone operations that may interfere with emergency responses or disrupt public events. However, a local ordinance aimed at discouraging dangerous uses of drones, as well as regulating the location of takeoffs and landings, would be permitted and legally enforceable under the Federal Aviation Administration’s guidance.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council REQUEST the City Attorney, in consultation with Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles Fire Department, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Emergency Management Department, and the Port of Los Angeles, to draft an ordinance repealing the unenforceable sections of LAMC 56.31 and permitting LAPD to respond to dangerous uses of drones and protect our city’s critical infrastructure, while ensuring consistency with Federal Aviation Administration guidelines and regulations.

PRESENTED BY


JOHN S. LEECouncilmember, 12th District

SECONDED BY


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