



HOUSE BILL 337: Unmanned Aircraft Systems Law Revisions.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee: House Judiciary II
Introduced by: Rep. Torbett
Analysis of: First Edition

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OVERVIEW: *House Bill 337 would revise multiple existing statutes related to use limitations and commercial operation permitting requirements for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).*

CURRENT LAW:

G.S. 15A-300.1(a) defines various types of aircraft for the purposes of Article 16B, Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems, which include: "manned aircraft"; "model aircraft"; "unmanned aircraft"; and "unmanned aircraft systems."

G.S. 15A-300.1(b) prohibits using a UAS for surveillance of a person or a dwelling occupied by a person or private lands without consent, or taking unauthorized photographs of individuals for public dissemination (except for newsgathering, newsworthy events, public events, or public places).

G.S. 15A-300.1(c) exempts law enforcement from the general UAS use prohibitions in G.S. 15A-300.1(b) under certain circumstances, but emergency services are not currently exempt from these general prohibitions in subsection (b).

G.S. 15A-300.1(d) states that a commercial and private UAS may be equipped with infrared or thermal imaging technology for only the purposes listed in subsection (d), such as scientific research and agricultural activities.

G.S. 63-96 contains commercial UAS operation permitting requirements.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 would remove the definition of "model aircraft," and the exemption of model aircrafts from unmanned aircraft and UAS State law.

Section 2 would repeal 15A-300.1(d), and therefore would remove the use limitations on a commercial and private UAS equipped with infrared or thermal imaging technology.

Section 3 would add a new subsection exempting specified emergency service functions from the UAS operation prohibitions in G.S. 15A-300.1(b), and specifies the following as permissible functions: incident command; area reconnaissance; search and rescue; preliminary damage assessment; hazard risk management; and floodplain mapping.

Section 4 would align State UAS law with federal commercial UAS operator regulations, and would clarify that the State criteria and requirements could not be more restrictive than federal regulations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This bill would become effective when it becomes law.

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Legislative Analysis
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