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Governor

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
MAINE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACADEMY
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Michael J. Sauschuck
Commissioner

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Director

April 1, 2019

Senator Susan A. Deschambault, Senate Chair
Representative Charlotte Warren, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Room 436 State House
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003

Re: 25 M.R.S. § 4501

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and Committee Members:

On July 2, 2015, Chapter 307 Public Law (L.D.25 and now 25 M.R.S. §4501) “An Act to Regulate Domestic Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Use” was enacted. This new law requires the Maine Criminal Justice Academy Board of Trustees to develop the mandatory standards for a policy, if a law enforcement agency chooses to use an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone) for law enforcement purposes. The Board adopted the Minimum Standards on March 10, 2017. This law also requires these agencies to report their use to the Commissioner of Public Safety each year. The agencies then reported their UAV use to the academy with their annual reporting requirements, as outlined in 25 M.R.S., Chapter 341. The Academy on behalf of the Commissioner reports the following information to the Legislature as part of Chapter 307 Public Law in this annual report to include: a summary descriptions of the number of deployments for investigative purposes, the general nature of those investigations and the number of search warrants sought and the number of search warrants obtained for the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles.

There are 164 law enforcement agencies in the State of Maine and each chief executive officer must file an annual report to the Academy. For 2018, only 6 agencies reported that they had a UAV and all 6 agencies had a policy in place that met the MCJA Board Minimum Standards. The first agency is Falmouth Police Department, but they never deployed their UAV. The next 3 agencies only deployed their UAV for non-criminal investigative purposes such as: search and rescue operations, or for aerial photograph assessment of accidents, forest fires, other fire scenes, flood stages and storm damage. In those cases, the Maine Forest Service deployed their UAV 18 times, the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office deployed their UAV 6 times and the Brunswick Police Department deployed their UAV 1 time.

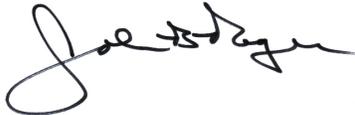
The fifth agency was the Windham Police Department and they deployed their UAV 9 times for non-criminal investigative purpose and 1 time for criminal investigative purpose. In that 1 criminal investigative case, Windham PD needed the UAV to take photographs of a crash scene that would be used for criminal prosecution. No search warrant was obtained.

The last agency was the Maine State Police, who deployed their UAV 41 times for non-criminal investigative purposes. The Maine State Police also deployed their UAV 21 times for criminal investigative purpose of which they applied for and obtained 6 search warrants. The following is a summary of those 21 crime scenes:

1. Assist the State Police Tactical Team to locate an armed suspect around his property.
2. Assist the State Police Major Crimes Unit in the mapping of the Deputy homicide scene in the Norridgewock area on 2 occasions.
3. Assist the State Police Major Unit in the search for the Deputy homicide suspect in the Norridgewock area on 6 occasions.
4. Assist the State Police Major Crimes Unit for scene mapping for an officer involved shooting in Wales on 2 occasions.
5. Assist the Sanford Police Department for scene mapping of a crime scene on a ball field in Sanford.
6. Assist the State Police Tactical Team looking for an armed, barricaded person firing at the Tactical Team members in Dixmont.
7. Assist in the mapping of a large area for a reckless conduct with a weapons case.
8. Assist the Department of Corrections for an escaped prisoner in the Charleston area on 4 occasions.
9. Assist the search of a wanted women in Chester and in this case the owner gave permission for the UAV flight.
10. Assist the State Police Tactical Team searching for an armed suspect in the woods and in this case the owner gave permission for the UAV flight.

On behalf of Commissioner Michael J. Sauschuck of the Maine Department of Public Safety, I want to thank the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety for all the hard work you do and for your support of the Maine Department of Public Safety and the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

Sincerely,



John B. Rogers, Director
Maine Criminal Justice Academy