

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6437

As of February 2, 2016

Title: An act relating to detecting and deterring dangerous drone operations near correctional facilities.

Brief Description: Detecting and deterring dangerous drone operations near correctional facilities.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, O'Ban, Schoesler, Warnick, Brown, Honeyford and Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/02/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Staff: Tim Ford (786-7423)

Background: Unmanned aerial vehicles, commonly known as drones, are relatively new, inexpensive, and a ubiquitous technology that have many uses, including research, surveillance, commerce, recreation, public safety, and others. Drones may also be used for nefarious purposes such as the delivery of drugs, weapons, or other contraband to state prison inmates. Contraband is specified by the Department of Corrections policy to include illegal items, explosives, deadly weapons, alcoholic beverages, drugs, tobacco products, controlled substances, and any item that is controlled, limited, or prohibited on the grounds or within the secure perimeter of a correctional facility as defined by Department of Corrections and facility policy. The Department of Corrections may search visitors to state prisons to prevent and control the transfer of contraband.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Corrections must acquire and utilize technology to detect and deter drone operations near, over, or within correctional facilities. "Deterrence" includes electronic, physical, or other safe means of preventing or stopping unauthorized drone operations at or near correctional facilities. The Department may authorize drone operations where there is a clear public interest or benefit and the drone operations are conducted safely in accordance with federal regulations.

The crime of a "dangerous drone operation" is established. A person is guilty of a dangerous drone operation if the person knowingly operates a drone, over or within 1000 feet of the perimeter of a correctional facility, without authorization from the Department of

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Corrections. A dangerous drone operation is an unranked class C felony. The crime of a dangerous drone operation does not apply to drone operations by federal, state, or local governmental agencies.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 1, 2016.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Concerns of the Department of Corrections include whether the addition of another security system can be maintained forever. We are not aware of any drones over prisons in WA state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Steve Sinclair, Department of Corrections.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.