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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the division of  
2 conservation and resources enforcement of the department of land  
3 and natural resources has vast responsibility for enforcing  
4 state laws related to natural and cultural resources on over one  
5 million acres of state land and three million acres of state  
6 ocean waters. Many of the lands and waters under the  
7 responsibility of the division are in remote, off-road, or  
8 inaccessible areas, creating obstacles to timely and effective  
9 investigation, evidence gathering, and prosecution for natural  
10 and cultural resource violations. Violators often are highly  
11 aware of, and exploit, the access limitations of the division  
12 and focus their illegal activities in areas or at times when the  
13 division cannot observe or investigate alleged violations in a  
14 timely manner.

15           The legislature further finds that unmanned aircraft  
16 systems, commonly known as drones, provide a unique and powerful  
17 tool for monitoring potentially illegal activity on public lands



1 and can aid effective enforcement. The legislature recognizes  
2 that this kind of modern enforcement tool can provide an  
3 efficient, cost-effective, and valuable method of obtaining  
4 admissible evidence for enforcement proceedings, as well as  
5 deter illegal conduct on public lands. A number of other  
6 states, such as California and Texas, have developed programs  
7 that authorize unmanned aircraft systems for natural resources  
8 monitoring, enforcement, and investigation. In Hawaii, the  
9 Honolulu police department has a policy that authorizes  
10 deployment of unmanned aircraft systems for specific operations  
11 and sets forth procedures regarding the use of the recordings as  
12 evidence. The Honolulu police department policy recognizes that  
13 unmanned aircraft systems provide efficient enforcement tools  
14 that enhance police effectiveness and public safety.

15 The legislature also finds that providing the department of  
16 land and natural resources specific authority to establish and  
17 operate an unmanned aircraft systems program under the division  
18 of conservation and resources enforcement is essential to  
19 enhancing compliance with state natural and cultural resource  
20 laws.

21 The purpose of this Act is to:



- 1 (1) Require and appropriate funds for the department of  
2 land and natural resources to establish an unmanned  
3 aircraft systems program that is compliant with  
4 federal and state laws;
- 5 (2) Authorize the use of unmanned aircraft systems to  
6 monitor, investigate, and obtain admissible evidence  
7 of natural and cultural resource violations; and
- 8 (3) Beginning January 1, 2026, require an annual report to  
9 the legislature on the unmanned aircraft systems  
10 program.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 199, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
12 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
13 and to read as follows:

14 "§199- Unmanned aircraft systems program. (a) No  
15 later than June 30, 2025, the department of land and natural  
16 resources shall establish an unmanned aircraft systems program,  
17 which shall be compliant with all applicable federal and state  
18 laws, to assist the conservation and resources enforcement  
19 program in carrying out its duties under this chapter.

20 (b) Conservation and resources enforcement officers may  
21 use unmanned aircraft systems to monitor, investigate, and



1 obtain evidence of natural and cultural resource violations to  
2 carry out the purposes of this chapter.

3 (c) The department of land and natural resources shall  
4 maintain detailed records of the use of unmanned aircraft  
5 systems and the effectiveness of the unmanned aircraft systems  
6 program.

7 (d) The department of land and natural resources shall  
8 submit an annual report to the legislature no later than January  
9 1, 2026, and every year thereafter, on the unmanned aircraft  
10 systems program for the preceding annual period. The report  
11 shall be available to the public on the department's website and  
12 include:

- 13 (1) A log of each use of an unmanned aircraft system,  
14 including the date, time, location, and types of  
15 incidents and justification for use;
- 16 (2) A log of the civil or criminal investigations aided by  
17 the use of an unmanned aircraft system;
- 18 (3) A log of any other uses of an unmanned aircraft  
19 system; and
- 20 (4) A description of the program costs for the reporting  
21 period.



1       (e) The department of land and natural resources shall  
2 adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 to carry out the purposes of  
3 this section.

4       (f) The department of land and natural resources shall not  
5 purchase, operate, or otherwise acquire or use unmanned aircraft  
6 systems manufactured or assembled by a covered foreign entity;  
7 provided that the chairperson of the board of land and natural  
8 resources may waive this prohibition on a case-by-case basis to  
9 the extent necessary for counter-unmanned aircraft systems  
10 activities, criminal investigative purposes, or exigent  
11 circumstances; provided further that the chairperson notifies  
12 the governor within fifteen calendar days. Unless waived, no  
13 state funds, including funds awarded through a contract, grant,  
14 or cooperative agreement or otherwise made available, shall be  
15 used by the department of land and natural resources in  
16 connection with unmanned aircraft systems manufactured or  
17 assembled by a covered foreign entity.

18       For the purposes of this section, "covered foreign entity"  
19 means:



1        (1) An entity included on the Consolidated Screening List  
2        or Entity List as designated by the United States  
3        Secretary of Commerce;

4        (2) An entity domiciled in the People's Republic of China  
5        or the Russian Federation;

6        (3) An entity subject to influence or control by the  
7        government of the People's Republic of China or by the  
8        Russian Federation;

9        (4) Da-Jiang Innovations; or

10       (5) A subsidiary or affiliate of an entity enumerated in  
11       paragraphs (1) through (4)."

12       SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
13 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so  
14 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and  
15 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
16 year 2024-2025 for the unmanned aircraft systems program  
17 established pursuant to section 199-            , Hawaii Revised  
18 Statutes.

19       The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
20 of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

21       SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on June 30, 3000.

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**Report Title:**

DLNR; Conservation and Resources Enforcement; Unmanned Aircraft Systems; Appropriation

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to establish an unmanned aircraft systems program. Authorizes Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement officers to use unmanned aircraft systems. Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to submit an annual report of the effectiveness of the unmanned aircraft systems program to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. Effective 6/30/3000. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

