

Emailed to CT MUTS members on 3/15/24

CT MUTS - SB3 update – PLEASE CONTACT SENATORS



Hello all – SB 3 made it out of committee in its original form, including Section 4 and now heads to the full Connecticut Senate. **PLEASE CONTACT YOUR STATE SENATORS AND EXPLAIN:**

1. If first responders (including public works) can't use Chinese-made drones, lives will be put at risk – give specific examples if you can.
2. Simply providing more time to switch to US-made drones won't solve the problem because US-made drones generally don't have comparable capabilities and where the capabilities are similar, the drones are much more expensive. Additionally, there are significant supply chain delays with US-made drones.
3. The drone can be isolated (air gapped) from the departmental network to prevent ransomware attacks, etc.
4. You fly over the same areas the HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF OTHER DRONE USERS have access to. If they're worried about China having access to photos, China can get them anyway from everyone else. All this bill does is take life-saving tools from people specifically using them to keep us safe. These same Chinese-made drones will continue to be purchased and flown by hundreds of thousands of people.

See my prior e-mails for additional information and the new SB 3 Page on our website. [SB 3 - CT MUNICIPAL UAV TASK FORCE \(CTMUTS\)](#) Please cc or bcc me on emails and let me know if you make phone calls so we can keep track of CT MUTS efforts. Here is a link with contact info for your state legislators:

[CGA Find Your Legislator \(ct.gov\)](#) **IF SENATORS DON'T HEAR FROM US, WE WON'T LIKE THE OUTCOME. PLEASE DON'T LEAVE THIS EFFORT TO JUST A FEW OF US – WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.** And finally – a big THANK YOU to those who have already taken action on this. Regards - Jen

Emailed to CT MUTS members on 3/8/24

Response to SB 3 information provided by Senators Duff and Looney

Hello all – the attached documents were sent to members of the General Law Committee and have made their way to representatives and many town officials. If you need to respond to this information, please see template below as a possible response (including

the photo showing Brinc lobbyist at the very bottom). Obviously, modify as necessary (put in the recipient's name!) or to address your town specifically, and change anything you disagree with. Feel free to contact me with any questions. Jen

Good afternoon _____: I understand you have received the attached documents prepared by Senators Duff and Looney. **First responder testimony before the General Law Committee on 2-29 in the link below clearly describes why banning Chinese-made drones will put Connecticut lives at risk.** If a resident or first responder from **our town** dies because these vital tools were taken away or couldn't be replaced, their relatives won't be looking to Senator Duff or Looney for answers. They'll be looking to you. And the question will be: **If the drone isn't connected to a department computer or flying over critical infrastructure, what security concern was worth my loved one's life?** With that in mind, please note the following in response to the attached documents:

1. The concerns are primarily that China may: 1) use drones to access department networks or 2) obtain photos and videos taken by the drone.
 - a. As to 1), **this concern can be mitigated by revising the legislation to require drones to be isolated from department networks ("air gapped")**. Connecticut first responder testimony before the General Law Committee, linked below, describes how they routinely do this.
 - b. As to 2), Connecticut agencies do not fly over critical infrastructure, areas not already visible by satellite or programs like Google Earth, or areas that are not otherwise open to the hundreds of thousands of other (non-governmental) pilots flying Chinese-made drones. **This concern can be mitigated by revising the legislation to prohibit flights over such critical areas.**
2. Florida has NOT recovered from the Chinese drone ban, and the fact that a Skydio drone can do one mission doesn't address the substantial impact Florida's ban had on the state's public safety. **Please listen to Chief Gentile's testimony in the link below as to one of the many consequences of Florida's ban.**
3. China's military and government can get information from manufacturers of the multitude of Chinese-made products we all use every day, many of which are clearly listening to us. Yet we aren't banning those due to cybersecurity concerns or Chinese human rights violations. And why? Because we weigh the value of the tool versus the potential for risk. Here we have a lifesaving tool with risks that can be mitigated as outlined above. Our agencies are not the United States military – and even if these bans make sense on a federal level, they do not make sense on a state or local level. **Please listen to the dialogue between Senator Kissell and Deputy Chief Gentile near the end of Chief Gentile's testimony.**
4. China hacking critical infrastructure is a legitimate concern. But it's far more likely China will hack directly into the infrastructure's computer system (probably through social engineering, which we've all been repeatedly told is the weakest link) as opposed to trying to find some critical piece of information by scanning through millions of random images from state or local agency drones.

Also, based on the image below, American drone manufacturer, Brinc Drones, just hired a local lobbyist to represent their interest – which of course, is financial gain, not public safety. We should support American drone manufacturers, but not by eliminating their competition at the risk of public safety.

Below is a link to the relevant testimony from the 2-29 public hearing. Time marks in red show where each person’s testimony starts:

https://youtu.be/D3QfCXwEZHU?si=U8P_g4qtqAage7dj

Mark Gentile, Deputy Chief, Rocky Hill Fire department: 00:03

Donald Janelle, Deputy Chief, Manchester Emergency Management and Co-Chair CT Municipal UAV Task Force: 14:50

Michael Shabenas, Chief, Dayville (Killingly) Fire District: 21:45

Christopher Vanghele, Chief, Plainville Police Department: 28:00

Peter Swanson, UAS Coordinator, East Hartford Fire: 32:21

Jennifer Yoxall, Co-Chair CT Municipal UAV Task Force: 40:22

LobbyLinx
Lobbyist Registration Changes in Connecticut

LobbyLinx is a free to search directory of registered lobbyists across the country. LobbyLinx updates regularly and sends notification of changes.

Clicking a lobbyist name will hyperlink you to their LobbyLinx profile (you will need to [create a free Search account](#)). Clicking a client name will take you to a google search result page.

Newly Registered Lobbyists:

- [April Capone](#) registered to represent [National Apartment Association](#)
- [Steven Hernandez](#) registered to represent [50CAN National](#)

Lobbyists who added clients:

- [Ryan Bingham](#) and [Michael "Mike" Johnson](#) added [Brinc Drones](#)

Lobbyists who removed clients:

- [Benjamin Josephson](#) removed [Cashman Dredging & Marine Contracting Co., LLC](#)

LobbyLinx and this email are made possible by support from our members, such as [CiviClick: Advocacy Technology for Modern Public Affairs Professionals](#)

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Co-Founded by the Original Owner of LobbyLinx

Emailed to CT MUTS members on 3/2/24

SB 3 - the fight is far from over - please help!



Hello all – first – thank you so very much to the 8 members who submitted written and/or oral testimony (plus me). Every one of them did an amazing job on our behalf; however, the fight is far from over. I understand the Committee may be considering a revision that would grandfather existing drones and give public safety more time to comply with a ban (maybe until 2027). This **will not solve** the significant problems this bill will create for (among others) the following reasons:

- New Departments will not be able to purchase and fly the best tools for the job which is very likely to discourage them from starting these lifesaving programs
- Existing programs will not be able to replace drones with the best tools for the job – if they know in 3 years they can't fly a DJI drone, they're not going to purchase any new ones now and their fleet will sooner or later be restricted to US-made drones, with all the resulting problems discussed in our testimony.
- The knowledge that the legislature is taking their tools away – even if in 3 years – will immediately affect funding, purchasing, use decisions for existing programs

The testimony our group members provided at the public hearing made it very clear that our agencies are not flying over sensitive areas and are implementing standard cybersecurity safety steps such as putting the drones on separate networks and not connecting them to department computers. The risks are minimal to non-existent in light of these circumstances and the life-saving benefits of the programs cannot be quantified – what is the value of just one life saved – particularly if it is your loved one?

Please contact your legislators – **again** if you already have – to explain that simply extending the time for compliance is not a solution. Urge them to listen – as just one example – to the testimony of Rocky Hill Deputy Chief Mark Gentile at **4:02** (4 hours 2 minutes in) of the testimony and particularly his responses to the Committee member questions:

[CT-N: General Law Committee Public Hearing](#)

I am attaching again – a flyer with the points that need to be made to legislators (in addition to those above). **Those of you from Senator Looney or Duff's districts (New Haven and Hamden, Norwalk and Darien) – they are the ones advancing this legislation. Please contact them!**

Thanks again for everyone's continued help with this – Jen

Emailed to CT MUTS members on 2/28/24

CT MUTS - Please try to attend SB 03 hearing tomorrow!



Hello all – some of our members have worked very hard preparing testimony opposing SB 3, which will ban you from flying all Chinese-made Drones (DJI, Autel).

Even if you aren't going to testify (you still have until 3:00 PM today to sign up to speak or submit written testimony), **we could REALLY use your in-person support at the hearing tomorrow. A strong presence will help show support for our opposition.**

DATE: Thursday February 29, 2024 (**TOMORROW**)

TIME: 12:00 pm

WHERE: Room 2B, Legislative Office Building, 300 Capital Avenue, Hartford
I'm told to try to get there around 45 minutes early, and that parking may be challenging. Thanks all – Jen

Emailed to CT MUTS members on 2/25/24

CTMUTS - SB 3 - will ground your UAV program - PLEASE HELP



Hello all – following up on my last e-mail about this issue ... to defeat this bill – we need to make our voices heard.

If you are willing to submit written or verbal testimony, **please let me know by responding to this e-mail** so I can provide you with more details going forward. A testimony template is attached. Testimony is due by 3:00 on Wednesday Feb. 28th.

If you cannot help with testimony, please:

- 1) Contact your legislator and provide them with the attached Objection (NOT THE ATTACHED TESTIMONY TEMPLATE)
- 2) **Make every effort to attend the public hearing at the Capitol at noon this Thursday Feb. 29th. WE NEED TO SHOW UP IN FORCE SO THEY KNOW WE CARE ABOUT THIS!** If you can let me know you plan to attend, that would be great.

Thank you in advance – Jen

Emailed to CT MUTS members on 2/23/24

CT MUTS - Connecticut S.B. 3 WILL GROUND YOUR UAV PROGRAMS!



Hello all – **A bill has come up in the Connecticut State Senate that will ground your programs if you use DJI, Autel or other Chinese-made drones.** Section 4 of S.B. 3 (Starting p. 8 of the attached) prohibits Connecticut state and municipal agencies from purchasing Chinese

(and other banned country of origin) drones as of October 1, 2024 and prevents agencies from flying them as of October 1, 2025.

A public hearing is set for NEXT THURSDAY February 29th at noon. We need as many of you as possible to testify as to how drones are critical to your ability to protect the citizens of this state including examples of how outcomes would have been different if you hadn't used the drone. We'll also need testimony as to the significant difference in cost and capability between DJI and US-made drones, and why this country-of-origin ban will drastically curtail if not eliminate your program. The attached document "Testifying Against SB 3" gives information about the public hearing and testifying, including the sign-up deadline of Wednesday February 28th at 3:00 PM.

The attached "SB 3 objection" provides information you can share with others and use as a basis for speaking with legislators and testifying. Please keep your eyes open for more communications from CT MUTS on this very important issue. **If you have links to newspaper articles and/or photos with narratives showing how your department has used drones to protect the public please forward them to me ASAP.** Lastly, we received the heads up on this from The Law Enforcement Drone Association (LEDA), which has also offered to assist with our response. Our new collaboration with LEDA has already proven to be extremely valuable!

Co-sponsors of the bill are below (and included in the attached objection). **Please spread the word and call your legislators!** Thank you – Jen

Co-sponsors of SB-3

[Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Bob Duff, 25th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Saud Anwar, 3rd Dist.](#)

[Sen. Jorge Cabrera, 17th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Christine Cohen, 12th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Mae Flexer, 29th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Herron Gaston, 23rd Dist.](#)

[Sen. Jan Hochadel, 13th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Julie Kushner, 24th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Matthew L. Lesser, 9th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Ceci Maher, 26th Dist.](#)

[Sen. James J. Maroney, 14th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Martha Marx, 20th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Douglas McCrory, 2nd Dist.](#)

[Sen. Patricia Billie Miller, 27th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Marilyn V. Moore, 22nd Dist.](#)

[Sen. Norman Needleman, 33rd Dist.](#)

[Sen. Catherine A. Osten, 19th Dist.](#)

[Sen. MD Rahman, 4th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Derek Slap, 5th Dist.](#)

[Sen. Gary A. Winfield, 10th Dist.](#)