



August 25, 2015

The Honorable Ted Gaines
California State Senate
State Capitol – Room 3070
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: SB 168 (Gaines) – Unmanned Aircraft Systems
Notice of Sponsorship

Dear Senator Gaines:

The California Police Chiefs Association and the League of California Cities are proud to co-sponsor Senate Bill 168. SB 168 provides immunity for first responders who damage a civilian drone directly interfering with ambulance services, firefighting-related services, and search and rescue operations.

Privately operated drones pose a serious threat to our state's first responders battling wildfires, transporting critically ill individuals and searching for missing persons. Earlier this month in Fresno we witnessed a civilian's drone nearly collide with an air ambulance. At the Cajon Pass, we witnessed a tragedy as dozens of cars combusted. The cause? A civilian drone forced firefighting operations to land, allowing for the fire to grow and jump the freeway.

The U.S. Forest Services has tallied thirteen wildfires in which suspected drones interfered with firefighting aircraft this year. In fact, this increasingly frequent hazard is causing local jurisdiction to offer rewards ranging from \$25 to 75,000 for information on interrupting drone-operators.

The distractions, delays, and heightened threat to public safety caused by the irresponsible use of civilian drones pose an unacceptable and growing risk for both our first responders and members of the public. SB 168 will allow first responders to continue their operations and keep Californians safe. Thank you for your leadership on this matter,

Should you have any questions regarding the Police Chiefs or the League's position on this measure, please feel free to contact John Lovell at (916) 261-7188 or Tim Cromartie at (916) 658-8252.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Lovell".

John Lovell
Senior Policy Advisor
California Police Chiefs Association

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Cromartie".

Tim Cromartie
Legislative Representative
League of California Cities

cc: Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Assembly Member Mike Gatto
Ronak Daylami, Consultant, Senate Judiciary Committee
Mike Petersen, Consultant, Judiciary, Senate Republican Caucus