



FLOOR ALERT

SB 168 (Gaines and Jackson)

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

SUPPORT

The California Police Chiefs Association and the League of California Cities are proud to co-sponsor Senate Bill 168. It is an effort to address the hazard posed by drones operating in flight-restricted airspace during an emergency.

This measure will provide 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 first responders battling wildfires, transporting critically ill individuals, or searching for missing persons. Earlier this month in Fresno, a civilian drone nearly collided with an air ambulance. In July at the Cajon Pass in San Bernardino County, a 3,500-acre fire destroyed both homes and at least 20 vehicles as the blaze jumped Interstate 15.

Prior to the fire reaching the Interstate, authorities had been forced to ground firefighting aircraft for safety reasons due to civilian drones operating in the area in violation of state and federal law. This was one of many such incidents in recent months.

The U.S. Forest Service confirms that drones have interfered with firefighting aircraft battling 13 separate wildfires this year. This constitutes an unacceptable threat to public safety.

We call on all Members to support this measure.