

Senate Hearing Testimony

Good Morning Chairman Argall and members of the committee.

My name is Tony McCloskey and I am the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT) Director for the Bureau of Aviation in the Multimodal Transportation Deputate.

I am responsible for directing all aviation-related programs within the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, which includes the following but not limited to:

- Statewide airport development and improvement program
- Aviation safety
- Airport and heliport licensing and safety compliance
- Commonwealth Flight Operations
- Aviation outreach, awareness and education

In the course of those responsibilities, the Bureau of Aviation works very closely with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and their Harrisburg Airports District Office, the Aviation Council of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Senate Aviation Caucus, the National Association of State Aviation Officials, and all of Pennsylvania's airports and heliports.

I have been asked by Chairman Argall to testify with respect to PennDOT's position on unmanned aircraft system operations, more commonly known as drone operations in Pennsylvania.

The Bureau's primary concern with drone activities in Pennsylvania is that they do not conflict with the 130 public airports/heliports, 537 private airports/heliports, the multitude of emergency MedEvac operations, agricultural spraying and vector control (i.e. black fly spraying) or any other flight activity.

PennDOT currently owns a drone, a four-bladed 'Dragonflyer' with a camera, which is about 3 feet wide and weighs about five (5) pounds. Prior to FAA's requirement that drones be registered, which was effective December 21, 2015, PennDOT used the drone for activities such as evaluating rock slides and sink holes.

PennDOT is proceeding to obtain a statewide Certification of Authorization (referred to as COA) through FAA once the state registration protocol development is complete.

As such, we are interested in initiating and supporting any actions that would enhance the education of drone users, aircraft pilots, and airport operators, on drone regulations and our expectations for the use of drones near airports, heliports and around flight activities.

The Bureau of Aviation does participate on several drone related national committees to stay abreast of immersing technology and policy, and is currently moving to assist with the promotion of national drone initiatives and precautions.

We are fully engaged with this issue and welcome any opportunity to assist with implementing drone safety measures.