

Systemwide Risk Management
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TO: Risk Managers
Campus ISO
Academic Affairs
Sponsored Programs

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SUBJECT: **Resources and Information re: DJI Drones Use**

Congress passed a law in December (the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2024) that bans the use of certain drones, including those made by DJI, from all Federal agencies and those entities that receive Federal Grants and/or awards.

The purpose of this memo is to provide access to resources and information related to the above so that campuses will be mindful of this update and can begin addressing impacts on applicable campus operations, information security, courses and research.

Here are the most salient points of this new law:

1. Starting December 2023, the federal government is prohibited from purchasing drones made in China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea or drones that use certain components made in those countries.
2. Starting December 2025, anyone receiving federal grant funding will also be prohibited from purchasing drones made in China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea or drones that use certain components made in those countries.
3. Also starting December 2025, the government, as well as anyone receiving federal grant funding, are prohibited from operating drones made in those countries.
4. The ban is in place at least through December 2028.

CSU Campuses
Bakersfield
Channel Islands
Chico
Dominguez Hills
East Bay

Fresno
Fullerton
Humboldt
Long Beach
Los Angeles
Maritime Academy

Monterey Bay
Northridge
Pomona
Sacramento
San Bernardino
San Diego

San Francisco
San José
San Luis Obispo
San Marcos
Sonoma
Stanislaus

See Title 18, Subtitle B, Sections 1821-1833.

“Components” are called “associated elements” (specifically communications links and components that control the aircraft, RC controllers, autopilots) in the law, and comprise elements related to the collection and transmission of sensitive information that enable the operator to operate the aircraft in the National Airspace System (NAS).

Congress cited national security (including cybersecurity and privacy) concerns as a driving force of this ban. Specifically, Congress is concerned that the Chinese government, using its own national security laws, often acts through private companies to collect data on both individuals and areas of sensitivity such as Federal research facilities and military locations. We often think of drones as flying cameras, but they are also telecommunications devices we operate inside our networks.

Given the saturation of the drone market by Chinese companies, this law may have a substantial impact on University drone operations. The following are things to consider in approaching this matter:

- If Federal dollars are being used, then do one’s due diligence to mitigate the risk of running counter to the Federal restrictions.
- Collaborate between departments of interest such as research, course development/curriculum, University Police, Public affairs/marketing, risk management, facilities, import controls etc. when addressing the campus’ approach to addressing the issue.
- Inventory the campus’ supply of drones, create a list and replacement cost estimate and occasionally review and update said inventory.
- Identify a campus point-of-contact for fielding questions and providing updates and/or resources.
- Communicate and collaborate with your colleagues in other higher education and research institutions.
- Ensure that only IOS apps and mobile devices are being used to control any DJI devices remaining in operation as the Android apps bypass the review of the Google PlayStore environment.

Here are three links that provide some good resourceful information:

The text of the new law: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2670/text?s=5&r=1&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22Title+18%2C+Subtitle+B%2C+Sections+1821-1833%22%7D>.

UC Center of Excellence Regulatory Updates: <https://ucdrones.github.io/regulatory-updates.html>

The UC Center of Excellence also has an updated resource page which contains a wealth of information at: <https://ucdrones.github.io/dji-drones.html>

Non-DJI Drone Recommendations

- [eBee X](#) (~\$13k) fixed-wing, Cat 3 OOP, but requires laptop in field
- [Wingtra Gen II](#) (~\$36k), VTOL with forward flight
- [Freefly Astro](#) (~\$32k mapping package), multi-rotor, 1.5kg payload capacity
- [Aurelia X6 Pro V2](#) (~\$22k NDAA compliant package, no payload), 6kg payload capacity

Questions? Please reach out to Zachary Gifford, Sr. Director Systemwide Risk Management, zgifford@calstate.edu who can provide guidance and/or assist in routing the inquiry to the subject matter experts.