



September 30, 2025

Chairman Patton and members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

My name is Mason Sisk and I serve as Director of Government Affairs at the **Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI)**, the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of uncrewed systems and robotics. AUVSI represents a broad coalition of drone manufacturers, component suppliers, enterprise users, and public safety agencies committed to strengthening the U.S. drone industry and ensuring national security.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our **strong support for Senate Bill 180**, which would transition state and local agencies away from operating small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) manufactured or assembled by a "covered foreign adversary." This legislation is a critical step toward safeguarding Ohio's public safety infrastructure and aligning with national efforts to reduce reliance on drones from adversarial nations.

Why SB 180 Matters

As outlined in AUVSI's **Partnership for Drone Competitiveness** white paper, the U.S. drone industry faces existential threats from foreign-subsidized competition—particularly from Chinese companies like DJI, which dominate the global market through unfair trade practices, including government-backed subsidies and "dumping" [1](#). These practices have:

- Undermined U.S. drone manufacturers and component suppliers;
- Created cybersecurity vulnerabilities in public safety and critical infrastructure;
- Enabled foreign influence over sensitive data collected by drones;
- Stifled domestic innovation and workforce development.

SB 180 addresses these concerns by restricting procurement of drones from entities that pose national security risks, aligning Ohio with federal actions taken by the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies. Multiple U.S. government agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Treasury, Commerce, Homeland Security, and the FBI, have stated that the continued reliance on drones from the People's Republic of China (PRC) poses a risk to national security.

It was in 2017 that the US military first began removing these systems from their arsenal. In the past two years alone we have seen Congress enact the American Security Drone Act (ASDA) of 2023 and the Countering CCP Drones Act of 2024 as part of the FY25 NDAA. While the ASDA restricts federal agencies from acquiring certain foreign-made drones, the

Countering CCP Drones Act will very likely prohibit the two largest Chinese drone manufacturers from selling new products in the United States within a year as they are placed on the Federal Communications Commissions' (FCC) Covered List.

Recommendations for Strengthening SB 180

While we support the bill's intent, AUVSI recommends the following **amendments** to ensure the legislation is effective, enforceable, and aligned with best practices:

1. **Clarify the Definition of "Covered Foreign Adversary"** We recommend aligning the definition with federal designations, such as the Department of Defense's 1260H list of "Chinese Military Companies" and the FCC's Covered List. This ensures consistency and avoids ambiguity.
 1. Additionally, you could simply require that sUAS procured and operated by Ohio state and local agencies are fully compliant with the American Security Drone Act of 2023
 2. **Include a Transition Period and Waiver Authority** To support public safety agencies currently reliant on foreign drones, we suggest including a reasonable transition period and waiver authority for specific use cases where no domestic alternative exists. This balances security with operational continuity.
 3. **Incentivize Procurement of Secure U.S.-Made Drones** In addition to the provisions transitioning Ohio's state and local agencies away from adversarial drones, AUVSI encourages Ohio to explore complementary policies such as:
 1. State-level grant programs for first responders to replace these insecure drones;
 2. Tax incentives for agencies and enterprises purchasing U.S.-made drones;
 3. Partnerships with U.S. drone manufacturers to support local economic development.
1. **Cybersecurity Standards and Supply Chain Integrity** We recommend incorporating voluntary consensus standards for drone cybersecurity, such as Green UAS, to ensure trust, integrity, and availability of data collected by drones.

Conclusion

SB 180 is a vital step toward protecting Ohio's public safety and advancing U.S. leadership in drone technology. By adopting targeted amendments, the bill can more effectively promote a secure, competitive, and resilient drone ecosystem.

We thank the committee for its leadership and urge swift passage of SB 180.

Respectfully submitted,

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AUVSI