



2026 FINAL REPORT OF THE ALABAMA UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM STUDY COMMISSION

REPRESENTATIVE JAMES LOMAX, CHAIR

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Commission Members

- **Chair:** James Lomax, Alabama State Representative
- **Vice Chair:** Jay Town, Radiance Technologies
- Tom Butler, Alabama State Senator
- Christine Cook, State Chief Procurement Officer
- Jason Powell, Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency
- Joey Hamilton, Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency
- J.D. D'Arville, Alabama Department of Transportation
- Adam Austin, Mobile County Sheriff's Office
- Chad Tillman, City of Huntsville
- Dr. Pete Weiland, Radiance Technologies
- Matt Sloane, SkyfireAI
- Yolanda S. Robinson

Introduction

The Alabama Unmanned Aircraft System Study Commission was created with the passage of House Joint Resolution 226, sponsored by Representative James Lomax, during the 2025 Regular Session (Act 2025-284).

The commission was charged with evaluating the use of drones by the state, the vulnerability of drones to unauthorized transfer of data by hostile actors, any practices or protocols necessary to secure sensitive data, and the feasibility of alternatives to current foreign-sourced drones.

This report fulfills the commission's duty to summarize the commission's activities and recommendations.

Formal Presentations

The commission received presentations from several speakers about issues related to drone use and potential solutions, including the following:

- Joey Hamilton, Special Agent, Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency
 - Discussed ALEA's current use of drones, including in search & rescue, crime scene documentation, traffic accident investigations, and crowd management
 - ALEA conducted over 2,100 drone missions in the previous twelve months
 - ALEA mainly uses drones manufactured by DJI, the industry leader
 - Foreign-made drones present potential security threats
 - Local departments are buying and using drones, but the training and skill level varies widely
- Cat Ramsey, Director for US Government Relations, DJI (Chinese drone manufacturer)
 - Shared DJI's commitment to security and data privacy
 - Highlighted DJI's "bug bounty" program
 - Discussed DJI's recent shift in allowing users to shift data storage to third-party servers
- Joshua Wright, Senior Logistics Analyst, CVS Health
 - Shared information on CVS Air Response program, including:
 - Medical Logistics, using drones to move critical medical supplies from hospital to hospital, or pharmacy to lab
 - Emergency Community Response, rapid delivery of Narcan or AEDs
 - Disaster Response, assessment and logistics in the immediate aftermath of disasters
 - Further expansion into more rural areas is hampered by regulatory challenges
- Ben Tristan, Special Agent, Texas Department of Public Safety
 - DPS uses closed networks and mesh radio solutions to increase security
 - Software platforms like DroneSense and Team Awareness Kit allow secure management of operations
 - Currently focused on contingency plans if foreign drone manufacturers are banned by the federal government

Recommendations

As of the submission of this report, the commission has approved the following formal recommendations:

- To standardize drone procurement practices across the state's agencies, with emphasis on law enforcement and first responders
- To require air-gapping for any approved drones manufactured outside of the United States and used by state agencies
- To develop a state-based model training curriculum
- To continue the commission or create some other successor entity to continue and broaden the mission of the commission

*** None of the commission's recommendations are applicable to the use of unmanned aircraft systems by private citizens