

SB 109 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

Prepared By: Beth Patrino, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs State Parks and Recreation Commission to adopt rules managing the use of unmanned aircraft systems (systems) by people in state parks to protect natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources in a park property or adjacent area while providing for enjoyment of recreational use of such systems. Specifies that rules may allow the State Parks and Recreation Department and its agents and contractors to use systems to carry out department duties and the use of such systems for resource management, emergency operations, or property protection.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), commonly known as drones, are subject to regulation by the Federal Aviation Administration; states have also enacted laws governing their use. In 2013, the Legislative Assembly enacted House Bill 2710, which provided guidance and restrictions on the use of a UAS. In 2016, the Legislative Assembly created a Class A violation for the reckless operation of a UAS, which includes using a UAS to recklessly direct a laser at an aircraft while the aircraft is in the air, crash into an aircraft while the aircraft is in the air, or prevent the takeoff or landing of an aircraft. In 2019, the legislature elevated this violation to a Class A misdemeanor if the action is done knowingly or intentionally or is a second or subsequent conviction for recklessly operating a UAS. (Senate Bill 581, 2019)

Senate Bill 109 would direct the State Parks and Recreation Commission to adopt rules managing the use of drones in state parks for specified purposes.