



March 17, 2025

To: Members of the Joint Transportation Committee  
Oregon Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97304

**Subject: Support for HB 3479: Liability Insurance Requirement for Commercial Drone Operations**

Dear Chairs McLain and Gorsek and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD), I write to express support for HB3479, which mandates aviation-specific liability insurance for commercial drone operations in Oregon. This legislation is not only a key step in ensuring safety and accountability but also a significant opportunity to enhance the digital infrastructure that will support and grow the drone industry in the Columbia River Gorge region.

The Columbia River Gorge is home to a thriving community of innovative drone companies that are pioneering advancements in uncrewed aerial systems. These businesses require reliable digital infrastructure to operate safely, efficiently, and competitively in an evolving marketplace. Ground-based sensors such as Remote ID, ADS-B receivers, and weather monitoring stations provide the critical data necessary for safe integration into the National Airspace System (NAS). Expanding these systems will enable beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations, allowing companies to develop and deploy advanced drone technologies for wildfire detection, precision agriculture, infrastructure inspections, and emergency response.

Furthermore, the insurance surcharge proposed in this legislation will directly contribute to funding the deployment and maintenance of these vital sensor networks. By investing in a robust digital infrastructure, Oregon will strengthen its position as a leader in the drone industry, attracting additional companies and workforce opportunities to the Mid-Columbia region. Reliable airspace awareness and communications systems will encourage innovation, enhance operational capabilities, and provide a safer and more predictable environment for all airspace users.

Requiring liability insurance for commercial drone operators ensures that companies maintain high safety standards while also reinforcing compliance with FAA regulations. This, in turn, will increase public confidence in the industry and promote sustainable economic growth in the Columbia River Gorge, where drone technology plays an increasingly vital role in regional economic development.

The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District urges the Oregon Legislature to pass HB3479 and take a proactive approach to supporting digital infrastructure investments that will benefit both public safety and the growing drone economy. By prioritizing these initiatives, Oregon will create new opportunities for businesses, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers while ensuring a safer and more efficient airspace system.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss how this legislation can support economic growth and technological advancement in the Columbia River Gorge.

Sincerely,  
  
Jessica Metta  
Executive Director