

## **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 238**

Submitted by: Brian Austin, Criminal Intelligence Analyst / sUAS Pilot

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Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 238, which responsibly modernizes Oregon's statutory framework for law enforcement use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), or drones.

As a Criminal Intelligence Analyst and licensed drone pilot with the Springfield Police Department, I have seen firsthand the critical value drones bring to law enforcement operations-whether in locating missing persons, monitoring unfolding crises, or providing real-time intelligence during tactical deployments. These tools dramatically enhance officer and public safety, often providing perspectives and access that no other resource can match.

While I am a fervent believer in individual civil liberties and the constitutional rights of all Oregonians, I also recognize the need for balance. In my experience, the minimal and largely theoretical risk of privacy infringement is significantly outweighed by the immense and proven gains in public safety. The current statutory limitations often prevent timely drone deployment, even during fast-moving and high-stakes emergencies where lives and property are at risk.

Senate Bill 238 strikes a prudent and reasonable balance. It preserves accountability and transparency while allowing law enforcement to deploy drones in connection with lawful police activities such as responding to calls for service, search and rescue, or emergencies involving threats to life or property. These changes align the law with the realities faced by officers in the field

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and bring Oregon's UAS policy in line with evolving public safety technology and practices.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 238 and ensure law enforcement has the tools necessary to serve and protect effectively-without compromising the civil liberties we all hold dear.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Austin

Criminal Intelligence Analyst / sUAS Pilot

Springfield Police Department

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