

Summary for HB 846

This legislation makes it illegal to use an unmanned aircraft to take pictures of private property or individuals. The Department of Public Safety must develop rules and guidelines for the use of unmanned aircraft by law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies using unmanned aircraft would be required to prepare a public report every other year that includes: the date, time, locations, incidents and justification for use of an unmanned aircraft; the number and types of criminal investigations aided by the use of an unmanned aircraft; the number and types of incidents that an unmanned aircraft aided law enforcement in a non-criminal operation; the type of information collected; and the total cost of buying, maintaining and operating the unmanned aircraft.

HB 846 allows the use of unmanned aircraft in certain situations. Unmanned aircraft can be used when a law enforcement officer is in immediate pursuit of someone who is reasonably believed to have committed a felony punishable by imprisonment; with a valid search or arrest warrant; with the permission of the person who owns or occupies the property; when investigating a human fatality; when investigating a motor vehicle accident causing death or serious bodily injury; or when investigating a motor vehicle accident on a state or interstate highway. They may be used by law enforcement or someone under contract with law enforcement to survey the scene of a catastrophe or other damage to determine whether a state of emergency should be declared; to preserve public safety, protect property or survey damage or contamination during a declared state of emergency; and to conduct routine air quality sampling and monitoring provided by state or local law. They may be used for port authority surveillance and security, as well as suppressing fires, rescuing someone whose life or well-being is in danger and handling the spill (or suspected spill) of hazardous materials.

HB 846 allows the use of images taken by unmanned aircraft for operations, maintenance, inspection, routing, siting and assessing vegetative growth by electric and natural gas utilities. Water and "other pipeline" providers may use unmanned aircraft to inspect, repair or maintain a pipeline or related facility.

Finally, it allows the use of images taken by satellites for the purposes of mapping.