

Favorable Written Testimony on House Bill 1349

To: The Maryland House Judiciary Committee

From: Brenda Myers

Date: 03/05/25

Re: Support for House Bill 1349 – "Criminal Law – Unmanned Aircraft Systems – Trespass and Surveillance"

Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I write today to express my **strong support** for House Bill 1349, which **prohibits the use of unmanned aircraft systems (drones) for trespassing, harassment, or unauthorized surveillance**. As drone technology becomes increasingly accessible, it is imperative that **clear legal protections** are in place to safeguard personal privacy, prevent harassment, and ensure responsible drone usage in Maryland.

1. HB 1349 Protects Privacy and Prevents Harassment

- Advances in drone technology have enabled **intrusive surveillance** that was previously impossible without physical trespass.
- HB 1349 ensures that individuals are protected from **coercion, intimidation, and unauthorized surveillance** on their private property.
- This bill is a **necessary response to increasing reports of drone misuse** for spying, stalking, and harassment.

2. HB 1349 Establishes Clear and Fair Boundaries

- The **50-foot restriction near a dwelling** is a reasonable limit that balances the rights of property owners and drone operators.
- The bill **does not interfere with lawful and responsible drone use**, such as:
 - FAA-compliant commercial drone operations (real estate, infrastructure inspections, etc.).
 - Hobbyist drone flights that do not intend to harass or surveil others.
 - Law enforcement and emergency services performing official duties.
- By specifying **intent to harass or conduct unauthorized surveillance**, the bill avoids **unnecessarily penalizing responsible drone users**.

3. HB 1349 Aligns with National Privacy and Airspace Concerns

- While **FAA regulations govern national airspace**, states retain the right to regulate **privacy violations and property intrusions**.

- Many other states, including **California, Florida, and Texas**, have enacted similar laws restricting drone surveillance **to protect residents from harassment and privacy invasion**.
- Maryland should **join these states in setting clear protections for its citizens** without conflicting with federal aviation regulations.

4. HB 1349 Strikes a Balance Between Security and Innovation

- The bill ensures that **drones remain a valuable tool for commercial and recreational use** while protecting against **bad actors who misuse drone technology**.
- Protecting property rights **enhances public trust in drone operations**, supporting the responsible growth of the industry.

Conclusion

House Bill 1349 is a **reasonable, necessary, and well-balanced approach** to **modernizing privacy protections** in response to evolving drone technology. It ensures that **lawful drone users can continue operating responsibly**, while **protecting Maryland residents from harassment and unauthorized surveillance**.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE REPORT** on HB 1349.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brenda Myers
Hampstead, Maryland