

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2020 SESSION

CHAPTER 345

An Act to amend and reenact § 15.2-926.3 of the Code of Virginia, relating to local regulation of unmanned aircraft.

[H 742]

Approved March 12, 2020

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 15.2-926.3 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-926.3. Local regulation of certain aircraft.

A. No political subdivision may regulate the use of a privately owned, unmanned aircraft system as defined in § 19.2-60.1 within its boundaries.

B. *Notwithstanding the prohibition of subsection A, a political subdivision may, by ordinance or regulation, regulate the take-off and landing of an unmanned aircraft, as defined in § 19.2-60.1, on property owned by the political subdivision. Such ordinance or regulation shall be developed and authorized in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of Aviation (the Department). The political subdivision shall report to the Department any ordinance or regulation adopted pursuant to this section, and the Department shall publish and update annually on its website, and any other website the Department deems appropriate, a summary of any such ordinance or regulation adopted.*

C. Nothing in this section shall permit a person to go or enter upon land owned by a political subdivision solely because he is in possession of an unmanned aircraft system if he would not otherwise be permitted entry upon such land.

D. *Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit (i) the take-off or landing of an unmanned aircraft by a commercial operator in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations, or as deemed reasonable or necessary by private or public entities for emergency or maintenance support functions or services, including the protection and maintenance of public or private critical infrastructure; (ii) the landing of an unmanned aircraft by an operator in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations as deemed reasonable or necessary by the operator in the event of a technical malfunction of an unmanned aircraft system; (iii) the take-off or landing of an unmanned aircraft being operated by a sworn public safety officer in the performance of his duties; or (iv) the take-off or landing of an unmanned aircraft owned or operated by the United States government, or any operator under contract with any agency of the United States government, in performance of his assigned duties.*

2. That the provisions of the first enactment of this bill shall become effective on January 1, 2021.

3. That by January 1, 2021, the Virginia Department of Aviation, in consultation with representatives of the unmanned aircraft system industry, small and medium-sized businesses utilizing unmanned aircraft systems, localities, and other stakeholders, shall develop rules and regulations specific to take-offs and landings pursuant to the provisions of this act. Such rules and regulations shall be in accordance with federal rules and regulations and shall include a process for adoption of an ordinance or regulation, exemptions to the ordinance or regulation, political subdivision training, and notification requirements.