ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 29

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman BOB ANDRZEJczak
District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)
Assemblyman R. BRUCE LAND
District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)
Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman Quijano

SYNOPSIS
Urges Congress and President to fund FAA Drone Test Site Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/22/2018)
AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION urging Congress and the President of the United States to fund the Federal Aviation Administration’s Drone Test Site Program.

WHEREAS, The economic future of any society depends on its ability to develop new technologies and pioneer emerging economic sectors; and

WHEREAS, The civil and commercial use of unmanned aircraft systems, commonly referred to as drones, is one such emerging sector that is likely to shape future economies; and

WHEREAS, Although the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) published Part 107 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 C.F.R. s.107 et seq. (2016)) in August 2016, which established the first rules and regulations for commercial drone use in the United States, the technology’s commercial viability is still limited by the inability to fully integrate drones into the national airspace system; and

WHEREAS, Integration into the national airspace system, which would allow drones to reliably and safely share airspace with conventional manned aircraft, requires the FAA to develop a variety of industry-specific airworthiness credentials, air traffic control communication procedures, and operational regulations, especially for drones that fly beyond the line-of-sight of the operator; and

WHEREAS, Industry reports estimate that there will be roughly $82 billion in economic impact, including over 100,000 advanced manufacturing jobs and $482 million in tax revenue, created nationally within 11 years of the integration of drones into the national airspace system; and

WHEREAS, To support this emerging sector, Congress passed the “FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012” (49 U.S.C. s.40101) which established several research and development programs to support civil and commercial drone technological advancement and lay the groundwork for airspace integration; and

WHEREAS, Most importantly, the act established a Drone Test Site Program in which six geographically diverse test sites were created to provide the research findings and operational experiences needed to ensure the safe and efficient integration of drones into national airspace; and

WHEREAS, Through the “Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership,” New Jersey, Virginia, and Maryland were selected to host a joint test site, with the Cape May Airport in Rio Grande, New Jersey serving as a primary research facility; and

WHEREAS, At this test site, leading researchers from Rutgers University, Virginia Tech University, and the University of Maryland focus on developing airworthiness certification standards, beyond visual line-of-sight flight operations, and long-distance drone communication technology, all of which are necessary for the safe and efficient operation of drones; and
WHEREAS, In addition to helping the United States become a global leader of civil and commercial drone technology, the Drone Test Site Program transforms New Jersey into a regional hub for this emerging economic sector; and

WHEREAS, Limited federal support for the program, however, now jeopardizes this bright economic future; and

WHEREAS, Because test sites do not receive direct federal funding, most are forced to rent their facilities for industry drone flights in order to finance research operations; and

WHEREAS, As a result, budgetary constraints make it difficult for test sites to conduct the extensive research that is needed to safely and efficiently integrate drones into the national airspace system; and

WHEREAS, Because test sites do not receive direct federal funding, most are forced to rent their facilities for industry drone flights in order to finance research operations; and

WHEREAS, As a result, budgetary constraints make it difficult for test sites to conduct the extensive research that is needed to safely and efficiently integrate drones into the national airspace system; and

WHEREAS, Because test sites do not receive direct federal funding, most are forced to rent their facilities for industry drone flights in order to finance research operations; and

WHEREAS, As a result, budgetary constraints make it difficult for test sites to conduct the extensive research that is needed to safely and efficiently integrate drones into the national airspace system; and

WHEREAS, Congressional funding for the FAA Drone Test Site Program could rectify this problem and ensure that the United States becomes a pioneer of civil and commercial drone technology; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. This House respectfully urges Congress and the President of the United States to fund the Federal Aviation Administration’s Drone Test Site Program so that test sites are able to more effectively support drone integration into the national airspace system and ensure that the United States becomes a world leader in civil and commercial drone technology.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the President of the United States, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of Congress elected from this State.

STATEMENT

This resolution respectfully urges Congress and the President of the United States to fund the Federal Aviation Administration’s Drone Test Site Program so that test sites more effectively support drone integration into the national airspace system. Developments in civil and commercial drone technology offer the potential for long-term economic growth. Industry reports indicate that within roughly 10 years the technology could generate over $82 billion in
economic impact nationally, including over 100,000 jobs and $482 million in tax revenue.

This economic potential is dependent on the efficient integration of drones into the national airspace system. Airspace integration means that the necessary operational and regulatory standards are in place to ensure that drones can safely share airspace with conventional aircraft in a reliable manner. To date, more research is required before drone airspace integration is achieved and commercial drone use becomes viable.

In response, the FAA established the Drone Test Site Program pursuant to section 332(c) of the “FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012.” This program selected six test sites that were created to provide the research needed to facilitate the safe and efficient integration of drones into national airspace. The “Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership,” comprised of leading researchers from Rutgers University, Virginia Tech University, and the University of Maryland, was selected as one of the test sites, with the Cape May Airport serving as a primary research facility.

However, the absence of federal funding for the program has prevented test sites from conducting all of the research needed to support drone integration into national airspace. At present, most test sites are forced to rent their facilities for industry drone flights in order to finance research operations. As a result, test sites experience budgetary constraints that may require researchers to forego promising lines of aviation research due to financial considerations. By enabling test sites to pursue all lines of research, federal funding could ensure that the program accomplishes its objective of supporting drone integration within the national airspace system and transforming the United States into a global leader of civil and commercial drone technology.