



OFFICE OF SENATOR
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

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Gumataotao: Unauthorized Drones Over DOC and Government Detention Facilities Threaten Public Safety

Public Hearing held on DOC-requested legislation prohibiting illegal drone activity over Government-operated jails

A Public Hearing was held today on Bill No. 191 by Senator Shawn Gumataotao. If approved, the measure prohibits the unauthorized use of unmanned aircraft devices, commonly known as drones, over Department of Corrections (DOC) property and detention facilities managed by the Guam Police Department, Department of Youth Affairs, and the Judiciary of Guam. Bill No. 191 implements a \$500 penalty or 6-month imprisonment for first-time violators and stricter jail time for repeat offenders.

“Correctional staff who are tasked with identifying and responding to drones must overcome technology that is quickly gaining enhanced abilities to deliver contraband and avoid detection,” said Senator Gumataotao. “Advances in drone technology have made detection and mitigation more challenging for our law enforcement community.”

“The employees of DOC appreciate the attention given to a legislative response to asymmetric security threats that evolve with the use of unmanned aircraft that DOC has experienced,” testified DOC Director Fred Bordallo, Jr. in support of Bill No. 191. “Federal law enforcement officials have communicated to us about potential trends with this technology and informed us about states enacting laws aligned with federal laws that are countermeasures to deter or mitigate such criminal and even potential terrorist acts with the use of unmanned aircraft.”

“Individuals in custody are regularly present on court premises for hearings, arraignments, and other judicial proceedings,” offered Administrator of the Courts Danielle Rosete in support of Bill 191’s intent. “Unauthorized drone activity near court buildings poses risks such as attempts to deliver contraband and potential threats to judicial officers, staff, jurors, and the public.”

“From a homeland security perspective, this bill aligns with our core mission: protecting critical infrastructure and preventing threats before they materialize,” added Homeland Security Advisor Esther Aguigui in support of Bill No. 191. “Correctional facilities are vulnerable points in our security ecosystem. When their perimeter is compromised, the consequences ripple outward affecting public safety, law enforcement resources, and community confidence in our justice system.”

“While I recognize the importance of drones to the effective delivery of critical public safety services, particularly for law enforcement searches as we witnessed during a 2025 islandwide manhunt which followed a terrifying incident in Talofofo, it is important for policymakers to restrict the unauthorized use of this technology over DOC and other Government-run jails,” Senator Gumataotao stated. “Unauthorized drone activity places an additional and unnecessary burden on DOC’s limited number of personnel who do their best to mitigate threats, particularly at a time when the prison population continues to increase and as its facilities deteriorate faster than leadership is able to prioritize repairs and the development of a new prison.”

For more information, please contact Senator Gumataotao’s office at (671) 647-1409/1411 or via email at office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov.