

**United States House of Representatives
Homeland Security Committee
Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee
May 21, 2024**

**Opening Statement of
John Junell
Chief Security Officer, Live Nation Entertainment, Inc.**

Chair Strong, Ranking Member Kennedy, other Members of the Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee, I'm John Junell, Chief Security Officer at Live Nation Entertainment. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the critical safety and security considerations in the live entertainment industry.

2024 marked a historic milestone for live music—it was the industry's biggest year to date. Artists toured the globe, and fans showed up in record numbers. Live Nation hosted more than 54,000 events, including 137 festivals, welcoming more than 151 million fans. 2025 is already shaping up to surpass last year's benchmarks – with more stadium shows scheduled than ever before, and the demand for both festivals and concerts growing at an unprecedented pace.

As the scale and complexity of live events grow, we are advocating for security measures to enhance as well. As the Chief of Security at Live Nation, I am responsible for leading the company's security program working in close contact with local and federal authorities to help keep fans, artists, and workers safe. Our commitment to safety is unwavering—we've continuously advanced our protocols and technologies, a dedication that was recognized through our receipt of the Department of Homeland Security's SAFETY Act Designation Award. Yet, there are limits to what we can achieve on our own, particularly when it comes to the emerging and rapidly escalating threat posed by unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). It's important to emphasize that Live Nation, as a private entity, does not have the legal authority to mitigate

drone activity in airspace, nor can we require our local law enforcement partners to acquire and use the necessary surveillance systems or counter-UAS technologies to prevent unauthorized activity. This limitation underscores why it is critical that more events fall within the scope of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued temporary flight restrictions (TFRs).

With the continued rise in domestic drone usage—highlighted by the FAA's recent report that the number of registered drones has surpassed 1 million¹, a roughly 160% increase since 2019's 385,000 reported²—and in light of recent high-profile incidents that have made national headlines, it is clear that an expansion of TFR authority is urgently needed. Strengthening these protections is essential to ensuring public safety and preserving the integrity of large-scale events. With that context in mind, I'd like to highlight several key areas where we believe Congress can take further action.

Congress took an important step in the right direction with the passage of Section 935 in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. Live Nation was proud to be among the foremost industry advocates for Section 935, which expands the FAA's authority to issue TFRs for drones at large public gatherings, including stadium concerts with at least 30,000 attendees, and festivals with 100,000 people. Enactment of Section 935 marked progress in protecting our events from airborne threats. However, more work remains to ensure the provision is effectively implemented and to further enhance its scope to broaden protections for fans, performers, and event personnel at live events across the country.

¹ <https://www.faa.gov/node/54496>

² https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/data_research/aviation/aerospace_forecasts/FY2020-40_FAA_Aerospace_Forecast.pdf

To maximize the impact of Section 935, it's essential that the FAA, state/local law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders across the country are fully aware of this new authority and equipped to utilize it. Clear communication, interagency coordination, and proactive outreach are critical to ensuring that TFR coverage for drones are authorized in a streamlined and timely fashion. We support a seamless TFR drone coverage application process by collaborating with our law enforcement and venue partners to reach out to federal agencies and request a TFR on our behalf. Even as the producer of a show or festival, we rely on our partners to request and grant any TFR. Ultimately, success depends on the venue or local law enforcement reaching out to federal law enforcement agencies, federal law enforcement's willingness to request the TFR, and the FAA's readiness to approve it. Without consistent engagement and follow-through, this new provision falls short of its intention to create more secure live events. Further education and acknowledgement of this provision enhancement is needed—including mention of the change on the FAA's TFR application webpage and the addition of a dedicated submission form to streamline the process for law enforcement officials.

Additionally, we ask Congress to consider lowering the current attendance thresholds to ensure that more events can benefit from the protective coverage of drone-related TFRs. These current thresholds are too high to address the wide range of large-scale events that still face significant security risks but fall just below the current limits. Many of our events occur at outdoor venues, which regularly attract 10,000 to just under 30,000 attendees. Last year alone, we had more than 1,000 shows in venues with a capacity of 10,000. While these shows fall below the current threshold, they still present significant and similar security challenges due to their open-air design and dense crowds. Similarly, Live Nation produces festivals across the country that draw upwards of 85,000 festival goers, require more than 10,000 credentialed

workers, as well as artists and their teams —yet are not considered to meet the 100,000-person threshold. Given their scale, visibility, and logistical complexity, they too warrant TFR protection. Expanding eligibility to include these types of events is a necessary reality to keep pace with the technologically advanced risks at large-scale events associated with aircraft activity.

As such, we respectfully ask Congress to lower the attendance threshold to 10,000 for events taking place outdoors. These proposed adjustments would represent a meaningful step forward—significantly expanding safety coverage for high-density events that are currently excluded, despite facing comparable security risks.

We also urge Congress to build on the progress made in last year’s FAA bill by further strengthening airspace protections to include not only *unmanned* aircraft systems (UAS), but also small, *manned and unmanned* aircrafts. We appreciate the bicameral and bipartisan attention this issue has received and commend Rep. Raul Ruiz and Sen. Marsha Blackburn for recognizing these evolving threats by sponsoring *H.R.2887, the Protecting Outdoor Concerts Act*³, which would expand Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) coverage to include small, manned aircraft. By doing this, there would be a critical gap closed in current policy which would provide a more comprehensive security framework for TFR eligible events.

We urge Congress to consider granting carefully defined mitigation authority to trained local law enforcement agencies. In the event of an unauthorized or suspicious drone entering restricted airspace, response time is critical. While federal agencies play a central role in countering unidentified aircraft efforts, they are not always positioned to respond immediately at

³ Senate companion bill expected to be introduced soon.

the local level and/or do not have the bandwidth to do so. Empowering designated local and regional law enforcement agencies to take timely and proportionate action, under clear guidelines and in coordination with federal partners, would strengthen real-time response capabilities and improve the overall effectiveness of TFRs. We appreciate the bicameral and bipartisan attention this issue has also received, and we commend Reps. Greg Stuebe, Dina Titus, Rudy Yakym, Lou Correa, Cory Mills, Jill Tokuda, Sens. Tom Cotton, and Jacky Rosen recognizing that empowering local law enforcement is a necessary step to mitigate UAS risks by cosponsoring *H.R.3207/S.663, the Disabling Enemy Flight Entry and Neutralizing Suspect Equipment (DEFENSE) Act*.

On behalf of Live Nation, we appreciate your continued leadership on these important issues and look forward to working with you to advance the safety and security of live events across the country. I look forward to answering your questions.