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New State Drone Laws Set Strict Operational Boundaries

May 2, 2025 by Miriam McNabb — [Leave a Comment](#)



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As drones become more integrated into commercial, industrial, and public safety operations, states are moving quickly to regulate their use. Two recent examples of state drone

laws- Ohio's H.B. 77 and Florida's S.B. 700 -demonstrate the trend toward stricter state-level oversight. Here's what these laws mean for drone operators and the broader industry.

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Full Text: Ohio H.B. 77

Highlights:

- **Prohibited Operations:** The law bans reckless drone flights that endanger people or property and prohibits interference with law enforcement, fire, or emergency medical services. It also criminalizes using drones to photograph, record, or loiter over "critical facilities" (such as hospitals, courthouses, and military installations) with criminal intent.
- **Local Authority:** Municipalities, counties, and park districts are empowered to create their own drone ordinances for public properties.
- **Penalties:** Violations can result in fines up to \$500 and/or up to six months in jail.

This law gives Ohio the ability to prosecute unsafe drone operations at the state level, in addition to existing federal rules. However, by allowing local governments to set their own policies, it risks creating a patchwork of regulations that drone operators must navigate.

Florida Senate Bill 700: Protecting Agricultural and Private Lands (Pending)

Status: Passed both chambers in April 2025; awaiting Governor Ron DeSantis' signature. If signed, it will take effect July 1, 2025.

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a drone in a way that disturbs crops or livestock.

- **Private Property and Hunting Protections:** It prohibits drone use on private property, state wildlife lands, or shooting ranges with the intent to harass.
- **Penalties:** First offenses are second-degree misdemeanors; repeat offenses are first-degree misdemeanors.

Florida's bill is part of a broader effort to protect farmers, ranchers, and hunters from drone-related harassment, with exemptions for law enforcement and government agencies.

Implications for the Drone Industry

These new laws highlight a growing challenge for the drone industry: balancing legitimate concerns about privacy and safety with the need for operational flexibility.

Drone Delivery:

Expanding no-fly zones over critical facilities, agricultural lands, and private property could severely limit the routes available for drone delivery services. Companies may face higher costs and logistical hurdles as they reroute flights to avoid restricted areas, potentially making some deliveries impractical or unprofitable.

Infrastructure Inspection:

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Public Perception:

Sweeping restrictions may unintentionally reinforce negative perceptions of drones as invasive or dangerous. If drones are seen primarily as a threat to privacy or safety, rather than as tools for innovation and public good, public acceptance and adoption could suffer. This could also slow the normalization of drones in everyday life, making it harder for the industry to showcase positive use cases.

Regulatory Complexity:

Allowing local governments to set their own drone rules, as in Ohio, creates a fragmented regulatory environment. Operators-especially those working across multiple jurisdictions-may struggle to stay compliant, which could discourage investment and innovation.

Ohio and Florida's new drone laws illustrate a nationwide trend: states are taking a more active role in regulating unmanned aircraft. While these measures address real concerns, they also pose significant challenges for commercial operators, infrastructure managers, and the broader drone ecosystem. As more states follow suit, the industry will need to adapt to a complex and evolving regulatory landscape.

Read more:

- [Texas considers ban on Chinese drones for state agencies](#)
- [High Stakes in the Sky: Michigan Legal Battle Redefining Drone Law and Privacy Rights](#)
- [Controversial Texas Drone Law Re-Instated, in a Blow for Journalists](#)



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