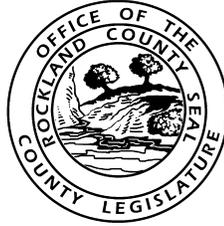


Press



Release

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Hood: New Law Sends Clear Message To Think Twice About Illegally Using Drones In Rockland

Vice Chairman Drafted Law After Sheriff Falco Raised Concern About Jail Drops

New City, NY (Aug. 19, 2015) – It’s happened yet again: Someone used a drone to drop drugs inside a prison, resulting in a fight among inmates attempting to grab the contraband.

Also this summer, a Kentucky man shot down a drone he said was hovering over his backyard where his teenage daughters were sunbathing. The operator did not have permission to fly over the neighbor’s yard.

“This is exactly the sort of thing we wanted to get ahead of in Rockland,” Legislature Vice Chairman Jay Hood Jr. said. “Hopefully anyone thinking of doing something like that will think twice before doing it here.”



Jay Hood Jr.

Hood drafted Rockland County’s new law governing where drones can be flown after Sheriff Louis Falco III expressed concern over reports about drones being used to smuggle drugs, knives and guns into jails around the country.

“We are concerned about contraband being dropped inside, as well as drones being used as a surveillance tool by someone looking to break in or out of the jail,” Falco said. “This law makes it clear that drones cannot be flown in certain locations.”

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On July 29, a drone dropped a package in a prison yard at the Mansfield Correctional Institution in Mansfield, Ohio. It contained nearly a quarter ounce of heroin, more than 2 ounces of marijuana and more than 5 ounces of tobacco, according to published reports.



Louis Falco III

Under Rockland's law, anyone flying a drone without authorization within 50 feet of a school, house of worship, the county jail, the sheriff's facility or a government complex would face up to \$500 in fines and up to six months in jail. A second offense within a year or a third offense within two years would bring a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to one year in jail.

Under the new law, drones are limited to the operator's private property, public parks, and other private or public property with permission of the property owner. Law enforcement, fire and emergency service agencies are allowed to fly drones, as are power and water companies that are surveying their facilities.

Hood said Rockland's new law is an effort to create some rules as the popularity of drones, sometimes called unmanned aircraft systems, soars.

Sales of drones are projected to approach 700,000 in 2015

The Consumer Electronics Association, a technology trade group, projects that unit sales of drones will approach 700,000 in 2015, a 63 percent increase over 2014 sales.

Among major areas of concern are drones flown near airports and planes, and firefighters battling blazes, as well as drones dropping drugs and weapons to prison inmates.

The Federal Aviation Administration is considering new laws to address some of the problems, including the possibility that drones be registered at the time of their purchase to allow tracking if FAA rules are broken, according to published reports.

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