

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1662

Introduced by Assembly Member Chau

January 13, 2016

An act to add Section 20019 to the Vehicle Code, relating to unmanned aircraft systems.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1662, as introduced, Chau. Unmanned aircraft systems: accident reporting.

Existing federal law, the Federal Aviation Administration Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, provides for the integration of unmanned aircraft systems, commonly known as drones, into the national airspace system. Existing federal law requires the operator of an unmanned aircraft system to immediately, and by the most expeditious means available, notify the nearest National Transportation Safety Board office when, among other things, an aircraft accident, as defined, or certain serious incidents occur. Those notifications are required to include, among other things, the name of the owner of the unmanned aircraft system, the name of the operator of the unmanned aircraft system, the date and time of the accident, and the nature of the accident.

Existing state law requires the driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injury to any person, other than himself or herself, or in the death of any person, to immediately stop the vehicle at the scene of the accident and provide certain information and render assistance, as necessary, to the driver and occupants of the other vehicle and provide the specified information to any traffic or police officer at the scene of the accident. A person who violates this requirement is

guilty of a misdemeanor or a felony. Existing law requires the driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting only in damage to any property, including vehicles, to immediately stop the vehicle at the nearest location that will not impede traffic or otherwise jeopardize the safety of other motorists and provide certain information to the owner or person in charge of the damaged property or place that information in a conspicuous place on the damaged property. A person who violates this requirement is guilty of a misdemeanor.

This bill would require the operator of any unmanned aircraft system involved in an accident resulting in injury to an individual or damage to property to immediately land the unmanned aircraft at the nearest location that will not jeopardize the safety of others and provide certain information to the injured individual or the owner or person in charge of the damaged property or place that information in a conspicuous place on the damaged property. The bill would make a person who violates these provisions guilty of a misdemeanor. By creating a new crime, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 20019 is added to the Vehicle Code, to
2 read:
3 20019. (a) The operator of any unmanned aircraft system
4 involved in an accident resulting in injury to an individual or
5 damage to property shall immediately land the unmanned aircraft
6 at the nearest location that will not jeopardize the safety of others.
7 Moving the unmanned aircraft in accordance with this subdivision
8 does not affect the question of fault. The operator shall also
9 immediately do one of the following:
10 (1) Present his or her valid identification, if he or she has that
11 identification, and his or her name and current residence address
12 to the injured individual. For purposes of this section, “valid

1 identification” includes, but is not limited to, a driver’s license, a
2 state-issued identification card, or a passport.

3 (2) Locate and notify the owner or person in charge of that
4 property of the name and address of the operator of the unmanned
5 aircraft system involved and, upon locating the owner or person
6 in charge of the damaged property and being requested to do so,
7 present his or her valid identification, if he or she has that
8 identification, and his or her name and current residence address
9 to the other property owner or person in charge of the damaged
10 property.

11 (3) Leave in a conspicuous place on the damaged property a
12 written notice giving the name and address of the operator of the
13 unmanned aircraft system involved and a statement of the
14 circumstances of the accident and, without unnecessary delay,
15 notify the police department of the city where the damage occurred
16 or, if the damage occurred in unincorporated territory, the local
17 headquarters of the sheriff’s department of the county where the
18 damage occurred.

19 (b) Except as provided in subdivision (c), a person who fails to
20 comply with the requirements of this section is guilty of a
21 misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not
22 exceeding six months, or by a fine not exceeding one thousand
23 dollars (\$1,000), or by both that imprisonment and fine.

24 (c) This section does not apply to either of the following:

25 (1) A law enforcement officer, or an employee of a police
26 department or other law enforcement agency, operating an
27 unmanned aircraft system within the scope of his or her
28 employment.

29 (2) A person operating an unmanned aircraft system pursuant
30 to the specific authorization of the Federal Aviation Administration
31 if the person operates the unmanned aircraft system in accordance
32 with the terms and conditions of that authorization.

33 (d) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

34 (1) “Unmanned aircraft” means an aircraft that is operated
35 without the possibility of direct human intervention from within
36 or on the aircraft.

37 (2) “Unmanned aircraft system” means an unmanned aircraft
38 and associated elements, including, but not limited to,
39 communication links and the components that control the

1 unmanned aircraft that are required for the pilot in command to
2 operate safely and efficiently in the national airspace system.

3 SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
4 Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because
5 the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school
6 district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or
7 infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty
8 for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of
9 the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within
10 the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
11 Constitution.

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