

Rep. Wichgers: Drone mitigation bill clears Assembly

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Madison-A bill introduced by Rep. Chuck Wichgers (R-Muskego) allowing local law enforcement to assess and disable dangerous drones passed the Assembly Tuesday on a bipartisan vote.

Assembly Bill (AB) 629 conforms Wisconsin state law to new federal law. The “Safer Skies Act,” signed in December, gives authority previously reserved only to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to state, local, and tribal law enforcement to identify a drone and to intercept, disable, or destroy it if it poses a credible threat to public safety.

Under AB 629, local law enforcement will comply with federal training, certification, equipment, and reporting requirements. The bill also creates a definition of a weaponized drone to mean a drone equipped with a taser, firearm, flamethrower, chemical, or explosive device.

Representative Wichgers issued the following comment:

“I appreciate the support of my local law enforcement which brought this bill to my attention, and to the growing list of stakeholders who see the need for an enabling statute to support drone related legislation protecting schools and critical infrastructure this session.

It is a question of when and not if a community will face a threat from a bad actor operating a drone or drones, and we should be prepared. This bill puts Wisconsin in the legal position to respond quickly when we need to.”

The bill is co-authored in the Senate by Sen. Julian Bradley (R-New Berlin).