



August 22, 2016

Honorable Charles Margines
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**SUBJECT: RESPONSES TO 2015-2016 ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY
REPORT "DRONES: KNOW BEFORE YOU FLY."**

Dear Judge Margines:

The City of Los Alamitos received the Orange County Grand Jury Report regarding "Drones: Know Before You Fly." The City is appreciative of the Grand Jury for addressing this subject and offers the following responses based on the information provided by the Grand Jury in its report.

Grand Jury Findings

F.1. Recreational drones have greatly increased in number since December 2015 and it is probable their unregulated use will pose significant threats to public safety and privacy in Orange County cities and unincorporated areas.

The respondent agrees in part and disagrees in part. The City agrees that the usage of recreational drones has increased over time. As to posing a significant threat, the City believes any threat to public safety is minimal and manageable at this time. The City's Police Department has received two calls regarding the usage of recreational drones in the last two years.

F.2. With the exception of the recent Federal Aviation Administration registration rule, recreational drone owners are largely self-policed, which leads to a wide range of behavior.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F.3. Most of the cities and unincorporated areas of the County of Orange do not have a drone ordinance, nor do they have any immediate plans to enact an ordinance in the near future.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F.4. Most of the cities provide no educational programs for public awareness of the safety issues connected to recreational drones.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F.5. Some Orange County cities, despite recognizing potential issues with drones, are awaiting drone-related legislative action or other guidance by the State of California or FAA before enacting local ordinances.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F.6. The FAA-required registration of recreational drones provides a useful tool for local enforcement of drone ordinances.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F.7. Orange County cities have not established a procedure for reporting drone incidents, which results in under-reporting of drone safety and privacy events.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Grand Jury Recommendations

R.1. Each City Council should direct its City Attorney to provide a report to the city's police department and City Council on existing laws that can be applied to the use of recreational drones in the city's jurisdiction by December 30, 2016.

The City of Los Alamitos will request its City Attorney to establish applicable regulations and provide a report to City Council concerning the use of recreational drones in the City's jurisdiction prior to December 30, 2016.

R.2. Each city should adopt a recreational drone ownership and operation ordinance with regulations similar to those found in Los Angeles City ordinance #318392, by March 31, 2017, to the extent not preempted or superseded by Federal law or Federal regulations.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council in the future.

R.3. Each city should inform its citizens about laws and ordinances that apply to recreational drone operators through print media, city-related web sites, social media sites and/or public forums by March 31, 2017.

The recommendation has yet to be implemented but may be in the future. When an ordinance is considered and adopted by the City, the respondent will inform citizens about laws and ordinances that apply to recreational drone operators through print media, city-related web sites, and social media sites, but not through public forums as the City does not have staff resources to commit to monitoring public forums and participating in discussions in those non-City controlled forums.

R.4. Each city should establish and publish on its website a point of contact for drone-related citizen complaints by December 30, 2016.

The City of Los Alamitos already has a web based complaint form for all complaints, regardless of the topic.

R.5. Each city should post FAA drone ownership and operation education links on city-related websites, newsletters, and flyers by December 30, 2016.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented prior to December 30, 2016.

R.9. The County and each city should formally gather data on recreational drone incidents within their jurisdictions and review these data annually and report the results publicly. The first analysis and publication should occur within 1 year of publication of this report.

The recommendation is not warranted nor is it reasonable as it is not currently anticipated that drone activity within the City of Los Alamitos will rise to the level warranting this degree of scrutiny or reporting. Any drone related incidents are, and will continue to be, reported to the City's Police Department, or will be collected through community driven complaints. If a local ordinance regulating drones is adopted, Staff will review the effectiveness of the ordinance on an as needed basis to ensure that it is appropriately enforced and will recommend changes to the City Council, if needed.

Sincerely,

CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS



Bret M. Plumlee
City Manager