



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

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This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.

Bill Number:	H. 4679	Introduced on January 13, 2026
Subject:	South Carolina Drone Regulation and Public Safety Act	
Requestor:	House Judiciary	
RFA Analyst(s):	Gardner	
Impact Date:	February 5, 2026	

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill creates the South Carolina Drone Regulation and Public Safety Act, which establishes guidelines for drone operations. This bill also establishes misdemeanor and felony offenses for certain unlawful operations of a drone. Additionally, the bill authorizes law enforcement agencies to investigate and detain individuals suspected of unlawful drone use and to confiscate their drones and local governments may impose reasonable restrictions on the takeoff and landing of drones on public property.

This bill may result in an increase in the number of circuit court cases and potentially the number of incarcerations, which may increase the workload of the court system and the Commission of Indigent Defense, the Commission on Prosecution Coordination, the Department of Corrections, and PPP. However, there are no data available to determine the increase caseload and number of incarcerations. Judicial anticipates that the potential impact of the caseload in court can be managed within existing appropriations, unless this bill results in a significant increase in expense. Additionally, the potential increase in expenses for each agency will depend upon the increase in the number of cases and number of incarcerations. Judicial and these agencies indicate that if this bill results in a significant increase in the workload, then an increase in General Fund appropriations may be requested. For information, according to Corrections, in FY 2024-25, the annual total cost per inmate was \$37,503, of which \$35,696 was state funded. This fiscal impact is pending, contingent upon a response from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division.

The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) contacted all counties in the state and the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) to determine the local impact of this bill and received responses from the counties of Chester, Dorchester, and Florence, as well as MASC. Chester County and Florence County indicated that the bill will have no expenditure impact, while Dorchester County indicated the bill may have an undetermined expenditure impact associated with law enforcement staffing. MASC indicated that the bill will have no expenditure impact on municipalities.

This bill may result in a change in the fines and fees collected in court. Court fines and fees are distributed to the General Fund, Other Funds, and local funds. Therefore, RFA anticipates this bill may result in a change to General Fund, Other Funds, and local revenue due to the change in fines and fees collections in court.

This fiscal impact is pending, contingent upon a response from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 13, 2026

State Expenditure

This bill creates the South Carolina Drone Regulation and Public Safety Act, which establishes guidelines for drone operations. This bill also establishes misdemeanor and felony offenses for certain unlawful operations of a drone. Additionally, the bill authorizes law enforcement agencies to investigate and detain individuals suspected of unlawful drone use and to confiscate their drones and local governments may impose reasonable restrictions on the takeoff and landing of drones on public property.

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This fiscal impact is pending, contingent upon a response from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division.

State Revenue

This bill may result in a change in the fines and fees collected in court due to the new offenses established by this bill. Court fines and fees are distributed to the General Fund, Other Funds, and local funds. Therefore, RFA anticipates this bill may result in a change to General Fund and Other Funds revenue due to the change in fines and fees collections in court.

Local Expenditure

This bill creates the South Carolina Drone Regulation and Public Safety Act, which establishes guidelines for drone operations. This bill also establishes misdemeanor and felony offenses for certain unlawful operations of a drone. Additionally, the bill authorizes law enforcement agencies to investigate and detain individuals suspected of unlawful drone use and to confiscate their drones and local governments may impose reasonable restrictions on the takeoff and landing of drones on public property.

RFA surveyed South Carolina counties and MASC as to the potential fiscal impact of the bill and received responses from Chester County, Dorchester County, Florence County, and MASC. Chester County and Florence County indicated that the bill will have no expenditure impact, while Dorchester County indicated there may be an undetermined expenditure impact if additional law enforcement staffing is required to enforce the provisions of the bill. MASC reported that since the offenses created by the bill are not eligible to be heard in municipal courts, the bill will have no expenditure impact on municipalities.

Local Revenue

This bill may result in a change in the fines and fees collected in court due to the new offenses established by this bill. Court fines and fees are distributed to the General Fund, Other Funds, and local funds. Therefore, RFA anticipates that this bill may result in a change to local revenue due to the change in fines and fees collections in court.



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director