



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	Amended by the House of Representatives on April 14, 2026
Subject:	South Carolina Drone Regulation and Public Safety Act	
Requestor:	House Judiciary	
RFA Analyst(s):	Gardner	
Impact Date:	April 27, 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 including flying a drone within a certain distance of a state or local correctional facility. 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. The bill also repeals §24-1-300 and §24-5-175, related to the unlawful operation an unmanned aerial vehicle within a certain distance of a state or local correctional facility.

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 (CID), the Commission on Prosecution Coordination (CPC), the Department of Corrections (Corrections), and the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services (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.

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) indicates that as the bill does not specifically task the agency with enforcement there will be no expenditure impact for the agency. However, if there is an increase in law enforcement agencies across the state requesting SLED's assistance with detecting and/or mitigating drone activity due to this bill, there could potentially be a need for additional manpower and resources.

Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) surveyed South Carolina counties and the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) as to the potential fiscal impact of the bill and received responses from Florence County, Horry County, and MASC. Florence County indicates that the bill will have no expenditure impact, while Horry County indicates 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.

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.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Amended by the House of Representatives on April 14, 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 including flying a drone within a certain distance of a state or local correctional facility. 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. The bill also repeals §24-1-300 and §24-5-175, related to the unlawful operation an unmanned aerial vehicle within a certain distance of a state or local correctional facility.

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 CID, CPC, Corrections, 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.

SLED indicates that the bill does not specifically task SLED with enforcement and therefore will have no impact on the agency. However, if there is an increase in law enforcement agencies across the state requesting SLED's assistance with detecting and mitigating drone activity due to this bill, there could potentially be a need for additional manpower and resources.

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.

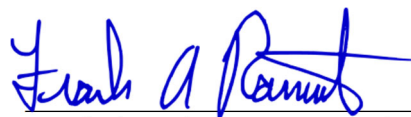
Local Expenditure

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.

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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