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Aerial Drones Present Increasing Threat to Critical Infrastructure U.S. Congress Introduces Legislation to Counter Drone Threat

Nashua, NH - April 16, 2015. Legislation designed to address potential threats posed by small and medium sized aerial drones has recently been introduced by Rep. Bonne Watson Coleman (D-NJ), ranking member of the House Committee on Homeland Security's Oversight and Management Subcommittee.

The Homeland Security Drone Assessment and Analysis Act (HR 1646) would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to:

- Research how commercially available small and medium-sized drones could be used to perpetrate an attack;
- Take the lead as the federal department responsible for developing policies, guidance and protocols to prevent an attack perpetrated with a small or medium-sized drone;
- Disseminate information to state, local and tribal law enforcement officials regarding how to respond to potential threats from these drones, and;
- Conduct an assessment of the security threat associated with the commercial availability of drones.

Although drones offer many positive uses, there is the growing possibility that terrorist or foreign adversaries could use drones to attack America's critical infrastructure, including electric grid facilities and nuclear power plants.

While DHS would be the lead agency for HR 1646, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the federal agency responsible for regulating security of electric grid bulk transmission facilities. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is responsible for regulation of safety and security of nuclear plants.

In addition to other avenues to counter drone threats, the Foundation for Resilient Societies supports U.S government efforts to assess drone threats to critical infrastructure and to modify electric reliability and nuclear safety regulations through the federal rulemaking process at FERC and the NRC.

Brian Sullivan, a former Federal Aviation Administration Special Agent, Risk Program Management Specialist, and retired U.S. Army Military Police Lieutenant Colonel, commented, "When the NRC established the design basis threat (DBT) for U.S. nuclear power plants, commercially-available drones did not exist, but now their availability and capabilities demand that we assess their potential to do harm and, at the very least, include drone overflights of critical infrastructure as reportable suspicious activity."

In November 2014, French authorities disclosed that drones operated by unidentified parties overflew 13 out of 19 France's nuclear plants. French law prohibits drones flying over reactor sites. No such overflights have been publicly reported in the United States.

The Foundation for Resilient Societies is a New Hampshire-based non-profit dedicated to the protection of critical infrastructure. As a matter of policy, Resilient Societies does not lobby for or against pending legislation. For interviews with Brian Sullivan or other critical infrastructure experts, contact Thomas Popik at thomasp@resilientsocieties.org or telephone at 855-688-2430 ext. 701. ###