



# UAS RESEARCH AND OPERATIONS CENTER

January 11, 2024

Colleagues,

On December 22, 2023, President Biden signed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) into law. The NDAA is legislation passed every year by Congress to provide policy directives to the Department of Defense (DoD), as well as suggested funding levels for DoD programs. This FY24 NDAA contains language that will substantially impact all federally funded research involving drones.

The DoD already restricts the use of drones from certain foreign entities, including companies from China and Russia, in DoD-funded research and operations. The FY24 NDAA broadly prohibits the use of federal funds from any agency for the purchase or operation of drones from these companies including for purposes of research grants. There is bipartisan support for this policy, which will fully come into effect in two years. The legislation allows for certain limited exemptions and exceptions from the ban, but we won't have final detailed guidance on the government's procurement policy for six months.

Banned unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) include the Chinese brand DJI, which makes the vast majority of small UAS sold in the U.S. today. Also impacted are custom-built drones that incorporate certain key components made in covered countries (i.e. flight controllers, radios, data transmission devices, cameras, gimbals, ground control systems, and operating software).

Researchers and students across the University should be aware of this new restriction as they plan to incorporate UAS into research projects. The UMD UAS Research and Operations Center (UROC) is a great resource that can help researchers steer clear of potential problems. UROC is dedicated to facilitating the safe and effective use of UAS in research and educational settings for University faculty and students; providing expert technical and operational support to public and private entities employing UAS in new and innovative ways; and advancing the state of the art in UAS and seamlessly integrating them into the National Airspace System. If you are currently using drones on research grants or contracts that will be ongoing two years from now when the ban comes into effect, or contemplating using drones in your research, we encourage you to contact UROC.

Please see a brief description of how UROC can help at [UROC Research Support](#)

You can also reach out to UROC for more information at [uroc@umd.edu](mailto:uroc@umd.edu) or contact me directly at [slots@umd.edu](mailto:slots@umd.edu) with any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Slaughter".

John Slaughter

Director

UMD UAS Research and Operations Center

<https://uroc.umd.edu/>