

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 13, 2025

Sean Duffy
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
Mail Stop 0525
Department of Homeland Security
2702 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20528-0525

Dear Secretaries Duffy and Noem:

Congratulations on your respective confirmations. I look forward to working with you to enact President Trump's policy agenda and stand ready to assist in whatever way possible.

Recently, significant numbers of Ohioans, specifically in Mercer, Darke, and Van Wert Counties, have alerted my office to the alarming number of drone sightings that have occupied airspace over their properties. Equally concerning is the lack of clarity from federal authorities about what might be prompting these sightings. These constituents, which include local sheriffs, contacted the Federal Aviation Administration to request information and assistance with this dramatic increase in drone presence. Unfortunately, they have yet to receive a satisfactory response.

In some cases, my constituents noted that the drones were the size of a picnic table or hot tubs and flying as low as 100 feet and at speeds of up to 80 miles per hours.¹ State and local law enforcement needs assistance from your agencies to help address these pervasive drones. Ohioans have a right to be concerned. Even worse, in December 2024, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, an incredibly important base, was forced to close the airspace for about four hours because of drone sightings around the base.² This issue must be addressed immediately.


Please respond with the answers to the following questions within seven business days of receipt of this letter:

- How can your agencies assist state and local law enforcement with identifying whether a drone is approved to fly over airspace and by which federal agency?
- Will you commit to informing state and local law enforcement when your agencies authorize the presence of drones in their airspace, prior to their entry into the airspace?

¹ Marcus Truscio, wane.com, *Northeast Indiana & northwest Ohio counties report hundreds of drone sightings* (Jan. 30, 2025), <https://www.wane.com/top-stories/the-size-of-hot-tubs-northeast-indiana-northwest-ohio-counties-report-hundreds-of-drone-sightings/>.

² Brad Lendon and Hanna Park, CNN, *Key US Air Force base closes airspace amid drone sightings* (Dec. 16, 2024), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/12/16/us/us-air-force-base-closes-airspace-drone-sightings-hnk/index.html>.

- What federal grants exist in your agencies to assist state and local law enforcement to procure new technology to identify, monitor, and combat unauthorized drones?
- Are your agencies formally tracking the number of unauthorized drone sightings across the country? If not, will you do so?
- Will you commit to transparent communicating to the American public the number and location of unauthorized drone sightings reported to and known by your agencies?
- Do you believe we need legislation to provide clarity on the rights of homeowners when a drone is flown over their property?

If you have any follow-up questions, please feel free to contact Rob Van Kirk on my staff at @moreno.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



BERNIE MORENO
United States Senator