



COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRATS
ENERGY & COMMERCE
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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CONTACT

Christine Brennan — (202) 225-5735

**Statement by Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., as prepared for delivery
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade
Hearing on “The Disruptor Series: The Fast-Evolving Uses and Economic Impacts
of Drones”**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As part of our ongoing disruptor series, today we have the opportunity to discuss one of our fastest growing and most exciting industries.

It seems there are drones for just about everything. Photographers can attach powerful cameras to drones to get shots from high in the air. Nature lovers can take footage of wildlife in hard-to-reach places. Surveyors use them to create more accurate maps.

Both children and adults fly drones just for the fun of making something fly. If you want, you can buy a drone shaped like the Millennium Falcon from Star Wars. You could say that drones are the next generation of kites, if kites were Bluetooth-capable and had a thousand possible uses.

And companies are looking into how drones can improve business. Retail giants are exploring delivery by drone, which will get orders to consumers faster than ever. Farms use drones to oversee crop conditions. And dozens of small startup companies are innovating new ways to use drones to protect the environment. One company has designed a drone that can sense water pollution from the air.

Commercial and consumer drones are attracting a huge amount of interest and investment. The Federal Aviation Administration estimates that a million drones will be given out as gifts this holiday season. And according to one industry report, investments in drone technology from January to May 2015 totaled \$172 million—more than in the previous five years combined. These investments are not limited to one industry or source. They come from government, venture capitalists, environmental groups, and huge technology firms, among many others.

It is exciting when technology leaps forward the way it has with drones. But as the industry develops, so do the risks.

As more drones take to the air, safety becomes more of a concern. Pilots have raised concerns about sharing airspace with drones. Drones have been seen in sports arenas, and pilot sightings of drones doubled since last year. There has also been an increase in the number of safety incidents, including a man who was killed after losing control of his drone.

Also, many people are concerned that drones could enable new invasions of their personal privacy. Drones can be equipped with cameras and recording devices, and can be flown into people's backyards or next to their bedroom windows.

States are beginning to pass laws to restrict drone use. Many of those laws are focused on protecting personal privacy. But some people are taking matters into their own hands by shooting down drones hovering over their homes.

Innovation and growth are vital to the American economy, but that innovation must also come with basic protections no matter which disruptor we are talking about. So consumer protections are needed for those who use drones and for those who come into contact with them.

By addressing these issues, businesses and consumers can have the certainty they need to continue growing and enjoying this exciting new space. I am confident that we can encourage innovation in the drone industry *and* ensure that there are strong protections in place for consumers. And I look forward to hearing from our witnesses how we can do just that.

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