



AN ACT CREATING THE OFFENSE OF CRIMINAL TRESPASS BY UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE; PROVIDING EXCEPTIONS; PROVIDING A DEFINITION; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.²

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Criminal trespass by unmanned aerial vehicle -- exceptions. (1) Except as provided in subsection (3), a person commits the offense of criminal trespass by unmanned aerial vehicle if the person knowingly causes an unmanned aerial vehicle to fly 200 feet or lower over the property or residence of another person without the authorization of the property owner or resident.

(2) A person convicted of the offense of criminal trespass by unmanned aerial vehicle shall be fined \$500.

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply to the operation of an unmanned aerial vehicle system:

(a) conducted by a unit or agency of the federal government, the state, or a tribal or local government, including any individual conducting an operation pursuant to contract or other agreement entered into with the unit or agency, for the purpose of protecting the public safety, environment, and welfare, including firefighting, law enforcement, and emergency response;

(b) by a peace officer acting in accordance with 46-5-109;

(c) within the boundaries of an easement with the permission of the owner of the dominant tenement; or

(d) being used by an employee or contractor of a utility as defined in 69-5-102 or a provider of broadband service as defined in 90-1-602 to help assess property damage or catastrophe damage or to inspect property and equipment, including cell towers and wireless telecommunications infrastructure and including the deployment of drones; or

(e) by an owner or operator of the system who has an active license issued by the federal aviation administration and is operating the system for legitimate business purposes in a manner consistent with applicable federal aviation administration rules, licenses, and exemptions.

(4) As used in this section, "unmanned aerial vehicle" has the same meaning as provided in 76-13-102.

Section 2. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 45, chapter 6, part 2, and the provisions of Title 45, chapter 6, part 2, apply to [section 1].

Section 3. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
SB 493, originated in the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

SENATE BILL NO. 493

INTRODUCED BY G. HERTZ

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