



# Louisiana Drone Advisory Committee (LADAC)

**Date:** February 14, 2023

**To:** Secretary, Department of Transportation and Development  
Chair of House Committee on Transportation, Highways, and Public Works  
Chair of Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways, and Public Works

**From:** Louisiana Drone Advisory Committee

## **Committee Membership:**

The Honorable Mark Wright, Louisiana State Representative  
The Honorable Robert Owen, Louisiana State Representative  
George Rey, Sr., Pelican Chapter AUVSI (Vice-Chair)  
Joshua Alford, Houma-Terrebonne Airport Commission (Secretary)  
Brian Landry, Louisiana Chemical Association  
DaCoda Bartels, Aerobatics Drone Division of Grand Isle Shipyard  
Bradley R. Brandt, MSA, Louisiana DOTD (Chair)  
Jonathan Kemp, Louisiana State Police  
Joel Champagne, Jr., Champagne Beverage Company  
Andy Brown, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation  
Robert Moore, Ouachita Parish LA Fire Department  
Jeffrey Messinger, Louisiana Society of Professional Surveyors  
Dr. James Dire, Fletcher Community College  
Dr. Balaji Ramachandran, Nicholls State University  
Scott Gammel, Louisiana Airport Managers and Associates (FAA Liaison)

**Subject:** L.R.S. 2:2.1.B.(1) & L.R.S. 2:2.1.E.(1) “The committee shall provide recommendations to the secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development as well as both the House Committee on Transportation Highways and Public Works and the Senate Committee on Transportation Highways and Public Works on policy and regulatory issues related to the adoption of drone technologies. At least thirty days prior to the start of each legislative session, the committee shall issue a report about the state of unmanned aircraft systems and unmanned aerial system industry in Louisiana...”

This report covers the actions and considerations of the committee for calendar year 2022.

## **Background**

The purpose of the Louisiana Drone Advisory Committee (LADAC) is to provide an open venue in Louisiana and all unmanned stakeholders to work in partnership to identify and recommend a single, consensus-based set of resolutions for issues regarding the efficiency, safety, integration of unmanned systems into the state of Louisiana and to develop recommendations to address those issues and challenges. The LADAC will provide the state's legislative, executive, and our federal delegation recommendations that may be used for planning purposes in the areas of legislation, operational safety, and economic development investments to ensure increased growth of this burgeoning technology.

The LADAC leadership is composed of a Chairperson, appointed by the Secretary of Transportation, and assisted by a Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and FAA Liaison person selected from the appointed LADAC members through a simple majority vote. The LADAC conducted deliberations on recommendations to be provided to the state's legislative, executive, Louisiana's federal delegation, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). All LADAC meetings were open to the general public. The Committee's structure was predicated on a two-tiered system with subordinate Task Groups (DACTG) established to develop specific subject recommendations and other documents for the LADAC. Adjunct to the LADAC is a Subcommittee (LADAC Subcommittee or DACSC) composed of members with broad knowledge and expertise related to the continued growth of drone technology through economic development in increasing operations, manufacturing, and maintenance.

The LADAC established DACTG to accomplish specific tasks as described above. Depending upon the type of tasking, DACTG products will either be presented to the DACSC for review and deliberation, then forwarded to the DAC or they might be presented directly to the LADAC. Members of DACTGs will be appointed by the DACSC Co-Chairs in consultation with the DAC Chairperson. Each DACTG will approve Terms of Reference defining the objective, scope, membership, specific tasks, and deliverables with a schedule. Unlike the LADAC and DACSC, members of TG do not represent a particular affected entity and are selected for their expertise in the subject matter rather than their affiliation. Task Groups will disband upon delivery of their recommendations as appropriate.

## **Louisiana Drone Advisory Committee Calendar Year 2022 Actions**

The DAC conducted four public meetings in accordance with statutory requirements.

The first meeting was conducted February 16, 2022 and was held at Nicholls State University in the Bollinger Student Union Cotillion Ballroom from 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM. A quorum was met as 9 of 15 committee members were in attendance. Mr. Joel Champagne, Jr. was appointed as designee for the Honorable Patrick McMath on the LADAC committee. On January 31, 2022, Dr. Jacqueline Richard was appointed as designee for Dr. Kristine Strickland. The LADAC letter from task group 3 (headed by Mr. Alfred) was sent to DOTD Legal Division and the FAA Legal Division for legal opinions on drone highways. Mr. Brown asked if other LADAC committee members could see copies of the letters that were sent since he is not a part of task group 3. Mr. Rey said he would check to see if copies are available and could be forwarded to all LADAC

committee members. DOTD will also post information from LADAC committee meetings on their website so the public can access and see the work of the committee. Mr. George Rey submitted a proposal for a new task group (#7) “Electrification of Aviation”. A Motion made by Mr. Alford and seconded by Mr. Bartels, to make a new LADAC task group #7 committee. The motion passed unanimously. Dr. Ramachandran made a UAS presentation about the Nicholls State University Department of Applied Sciences Geomatics Program, and will have a bus going to the Nicholls Farm after the LADAC meeting for a demonstration of the UAS equipment the programs are using. Mr. Rey asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience—there were none. Mr. Rey stated that the LADAC committee will be reaching out to another company, 911 Solutions, to make a subject presentation at the next LADAC meeting.

The second meeting was conducted May 20, 2022 and was held at the Louisiana State Capitol, House of Representatives - House Committee Room 6 from 10:00 AM -12:00 PM. A quorum was met as 8 of 15 committee members were in attendance. The committee leaders provided an update on each of their respective task groups. Task Group 1 provided that Mr. Lofton, Compliance Manager with the Federal Aviation Administration, came down a few weeks ago—asked him if there was a point of contact in Southeast Region for specific unmanned activity and provided there is not. Committee member was given a name at the Federal Aviation Administration headquarters in Washington, D.C. to contact—still trying to chase down contact information. Task Group 2 provided no report. Task Group 3 provided no report. Task Group 4 provided there were some committee member changes. Task Group 5 submitted a report to the committee and invited an industry leader subject matter expert to testify before the committee on how they utilize common drone technology. Task Group 6 provided no report. Mr. Rey recommended that between now and the next LADAC meeting in August, to get committee chairs together on a Zoom call to strategize how to implement committee recommendations and the path forward. Subject matter experts provided extensive presentations and briefings during this meeting. Mr. Joshua (Josh) Duplantis, Safety Program Manager and Mr. Reid Nuss, Airport Safety Inspector, from Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD)-Office of Multimodal Commerce (OMC)-Aviation Division, presented on UAS Integration. Mr. Robert Tabbarea, President of 911 Security, presented on Drones and Airspace Security. Dr. Jacqueline Richard, Fletcher College, reported from the Post-Secondary Agricultural Commission Task Force that was prepared by Dr. Richard, Dr. Kristine Strickland-Dean of Fletcher College, and Andy Brown- Representing Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation. Mr. Rey requested that the agricultural task force to review SB183 and make a recommendation to LADAC for changes and updates. Dr. Richard will check with other members of the task force and keep LADAC updated. The legislative report was included in handouts to the committee. Recommendations were made by LADAC committee to the Secretary, House Chair and Senate Chair 30 days prior to the start of the legislative session in accordance with statutory requirements. A vote was taken at last LADAC meeting to make a seventh group (#7) “Electrification of Aviation”. This group will have three members. LADAC committee members will vote on terms of reference at August meeting. To be consistent with FAA Federal Naming Convention, motion was made by Mr. Rey and seconded by Mr. Alford to change the name of committee from Louisiana Drone Advisory Committee (LADAC) to Louisiana Advanced Aviation Advisory Committee (LAAAC). Motion carried. Mr. Rey will notify Senator Owens, who is the author of the bill establishing this committee, in regard to the requested name change. On June 6, 2022, appointments for this year expire. Louisiana law requires that you have to make committee appointments—committee members will serve for two years. Mr. Brandt will

send out emails to current committee members and will CC person who was responsible for the appointment, with instructions on how to reappoint or appoint a new person to the committee, in order to make sure that committee appointment paperwork is in line with Louisiana law.

The third meeting was conducted August 17, 2022 and was held at the Louisiana State Capitol, House of Representatives - House Committee Room 5 from 10:00 AM -12:00 PM. A quorum was met as 11 of 15 committee members were in attendance. On August 2, 2022, Dr. James Dire was appointed as designee for Dr. Kristine Strickland. Election of officers for the new two-year term was completed. A nomination made by Mr. Alford and seconded by Mr. Bartels for Mr. Brandt to continue to serve as chairman. No other nominations were made—and all votes were “Yea”—vote approved for Bradley (Brad) Brandt to serve as LADAC Chairman. A nomination made by Mr. Alford and seconded by Dr. Ramachandran for Mr. Rey to continue to serve as vice-chair. No other nominations were made—and all votes were “Yea”—vote approved for George Rey to serve as LADAC Vice-Chairman. A nomination made by Dr. Ramachandran and seconded by Mr. Bartels for Mr. Alford to continue to serve as secretary. No other nominations’ were made—and all votes were “Yea”—vote approved for Joshua (Josh) Alford to serve as LADAC Secretary). A nomination made by Dr. Ramachandran and seconded by Mr. Bartels for Mr. Gammel to continue to serve as FAA Liaison. No other nominations’ were made—and all votes were “Yea”—vote approved for Scott Gammel to serve as LADAC FAA Liaison. A request for task group reports or updates was made from committee members. No new reports or updates were received from any task group leaders during this meeting. Mr. Brown requested that a Task Group “Terms of Reference” be included in the committee packets for the next LADAC meeting for new members as well as returning members to have a reference guide about task groups. Andrea Dupre’ from the Houma-Terrebonne Airport Commission provided a presentation and briefing on “Electrification of Aircraft”. A discussion was held regarding the terms of reference for task group 7. Mr. Rey was unable to attend the August meeting so the items pertaining to this group were deferred to the November meeting to allow Mr. Rey to present and brief on the direction and makeup of the group. Mr. Gammel provided an update on the FAA contact. Mr. Gammel reported that there is a new contact at the FAA—Abigial Smith—head of UAS. Mr. Gammel would like to get the FAA to come down in November for the next LADAC meeting (if they are able).

The fourth meeting was cancelled for November 16, 2022 and rescheduled to December 19, 2022. The fourth meeting was conducted on December 19, 2022 and was held at the Louisiana State Capitol, House of Representatives - House Committee Room 3 from 10:00 AM -12:00 PM. A quorum was not met as 7 of 15 committee members were in attendance. No official business was able to be conducted. The committee members present wished to proceed with open unofficial discussions and allow for a presentation and briefing on revising Louisiana Revised Statute Title 14:337. A group discussion was held pertaining to additional involvement and non-committee member participation in task groups to assist and provide industry level support in task group initiatives. An official discussion will take place on the issue during the January meeting. The LADAC Chair will research and provide information on the LADAC terms of reference and committee charter revisions necessary to consider these actions.

The January meeting was conducted on January 18, 2023 and was held at the Louisiana State Capitol, House of Representatives - House Committee Room 4 from 10:00 AM -12:00 PM. A quorum was met as 8 of 15 committee members were in attendance. A motion was made by Mr.

Gammel and seconded by Mr. Moore to approve the Calendar Year 2022 LADAC Committee Legislative Report with actions taken today during the meeting in regards to the Title 14:337 language recommendations. The changes will be reflected on page 5 of the report before the drone advisory task group reporting area. The motion was passed unanimously by the committee. A discussion ensued pertaining to the recommended name change of the committee. In an August 2022 meeting, the committee voted on changing the name of the committee from Louisiana Drone Advisory Committee (LADAC) to LAA (Louisiana Advanced Aviation Committee). Atty. Hardy advised that since the committee name was approved in legislation a bill would have to be introduced and approved by the legislature for the name change. Rep. Owen stated he would submit legislation, but would like to keep the word “Drone” in the name. Committee agreed that the recommended name change legislation should change the committee’s name to the Louisiana Advanced Aviation and Drone Committee. A motion was made by Mr. Rey and seconded by Mr. Gammel to recommend revising the name of the committee to the Louisiana Advanced Aviation and Drone Advisory Committee. The motion was passed unanimously by the committee.

A follow up discussion was held amongst the committee members regarding recommended language to §14:337 which pertains to the unlawful use of an unmanned aircraft system. Committee members recommended that statute of limitation language also be adopted. A motion was made by Sgt. Kemp and seconded by Mr. Rey to adopt the language for Title 14:337 as stated during the committee meeting and add a seven year prescription period or statute of limitation for this particular crime so if a repeat offense occurs within those seven years it will be considered a second offense or subsequent offense. The motion passed unanimously. The general recommended language from the LADAC to the legislature is listed herein and identified with an underline for new language:

§14:337. E.(2) On a conviction for a second or subsequent offense as provided in Paragraph (A)(1) of this Section, the offender shall be fined not less than five hundred dollars nor more than four thousand dollars, or imprisoned, with or without hard labor, for not less than six months nor more than two years, or both, and forfeiture to the law enforcement authority of any property seized in connection with the violation.

§14:337. E.(4) On a conviction for a second or subsequent offense as provided in Paragraph (A)(2) of this Section, the offender shall be fined not less than two thousand dollars nor more than five thousand dollars, or imprisoned, with or without hard labor, for not more than one year, or both, and forfeiture to the law enforcement authority of any property seized in connection with the violation.

§14:337. E.(5) A “second or subsequent offense” for this Section, shall be any offense committed within seven years of the date on which the last offense was committed.

Future LADAC meetings were established to allow for maximum participation from committee members and industry stakeholders for the 2023 calendar year. Proposed LADAC meetings are May 10, 2023, August 9, 2023, November 8, 2023, and January 17, 2024. Interim meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the LADAC.

## **Drone Advisory Committee Task Group (DACTG) Reporting**

### **Committee Charter**

The LADAC Committee Charter is provided in Attachment A. The Committee is an advisory committee established under Act 328 of the 2021 Louisiana Legislature. The Louisiana Drone Advisory Committee shall hereinafter be referred to as (LADAC).

The Committee's role is to review matters within its scope and provide recommendations to the Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to carry out advisory decisions, and serve as a resource for the Louisiana Legislature. The committee will provide the state's legislature, executive branch, and federal delegation with recommendations that may be used for planning purposes in the areas of law, operational safety, and economic development to ensure increased growth of this maturing industry.

The LADAC Charter listed in attachment A.

### **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference (TOR) is provided in Attachment A which describes and provides guidance to the DAC on the formation and specific duties of each DACTG. The roles, responsibilities, objectives, and deliverables are strategically and logically presented to allow for enhanced participation from members and to ensure the positive and economic growth of the unmanned industry throughout the state of Louisiana.

Terms of Reference listed in attachment B.

### **LADAC Task Group – 1 – sUAS Drone Statistics in Louisiana**

The small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) Drone Statistics in Louisiana task group establishes a set of economic baseline data for sUAS for the state. The task group is exploring drones procured in Louisiana, drones registered in Louisiana, industry breakout employing drone usage, academia usage of drones, and the economic impact of drones within our state. This work was assigned during the November 16 meeting and work continues to integrate and finalize these figures and data for the committee. This task group work satisfies the requirements for §2:2.1.E(1)(a)-(f).

Task Group 1 – No formal report for CY 2022.

### **LADAC Task Group – 2 – Economic Development Impact of Unmanned Systems for Air, Ground, & Maritime**

This task group will use existing studies and collected data to create a baseline of economic information specific to air, ground, and maritime industries for the state. The task group is exploring the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of drones. Further, the group is exploring commercial and community benefits and research the impacts of Urban Air Mobility (UAM) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) have on social and economic benefits. This work was assigned

during the November 16 meeting and work continues to integrate and finalize these figures and data for the committee. This task group work satisfies the requirements for §2:2.1.E(1)(a)-(f).

Task Group 2 – No formal report for CY 2022.

### **LADAC Task Group – 3 – Legislative & Executive Impacts That may be Hindering the Economic Growth of Unmanned Systems in Louisiana**

This task group is researching and establishing a legal opinion request for unmanned aircraft systems for the state to be transmitted to the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to define a position and receive guidance on legislation that would identify hindrances of FAA or state regulations on aviation easements and the FAA airspace authority. Regulation of drones should encourage safe and responsible operations, while promoting innovation and economic growth, so that people and businesses across Louisiana can continue to benefit from the new opportunities, jobs and services that drone technology brings. This work was assigned during the November 16 meeting and work continues to integrate and finalize these figures and data for the committee. This task group work satisfies the requirements for §2:2.1.E(1)(a)-(f).

Task Group 3 – No formal report for CY 2022.

### **LADAC Task Group – 4 – Legislative & Executive Impacts That Maybe Hindering the Public Safety of Unmanned Systems in Louisiana**

This task group is reviewing and researching first responders' use of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems(sUAS)/drones in applications pertaining to firefighting, law enforcement, and emergency medical missions. First responder organizations have used drones to search for lost children, identify high risk areas in burning structures, facilitate relief operations following hurricanes, reduce risk and exposure for law enforcement officers in active-shooter events, and many other emergency use cases. This work was assigned during the November 16 meeting and work continues to integrate and finalize these figures and data for the committee. This task group work satisfies the requirements for §2:2.1.E(1)(a)-(f).

Task Group 4 – No formal report for CY 2022.

### **LADAC Task Group – 5 – Current Efforts to Implement Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) to Protect Critical Infrastructures in Louisiana**

The exponential growth of small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS)/drones creates new risks for the protection of Louisiana's Critical Infrastructure, mass gathering, and the protection of the general public. Technology trends are dramatically transforming legitimate applications of sUAS while simultaneously making them increasingly capable drone weapons in the hands of criminals, careless, clueless, and nefarious operators. The task group is exploring the state's drone laws and recommending needed reforms and/or revisions to ensure the state is protected from advancing drone technology. Additionally, this group will identify possible new legislation or executive action to implement a statewide strategy to ensure full counter UAS coverage at all critical

infrastructure sites and further establish and promote public-private partnerships through an unmanned Center of Excellence in Louisiana that will work with government, academia, and private interests to develop common operating principles. This work was assigned during the November 16 meeting and work continues to integrate and finalize these figures and data for the committee. This task group work satisfies the requirements for §2:2.1.E(1)(a)-(f).

Task Group 5 – No formal report for CY 2022.

### **LADAC Task Group – 6 – Develop a Baseline of Unmanned Maritime Systems Development in Louisiana**

The Maritime industry is in the early phase of autonomous ship design, construction, and at sea demonstration featuring Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology allowing onshore remote control, light crewed or uncrewed operations that represent a giant leap forward for the maritime industry. Moreover, the impact and the scale of this coming AI robotic fleet will spark the biggest transformation in the maritime industry since sail gave way to steam. This task group will review the United States Coast Guard regulations potentially impacting the deployment of partially or fully autonomous vessels on the nation's waterways. Further, it will identify possible new state legislation or executive action to improve the state's maritime leadership through industry and academic incentives. The group will also identify impediments to shipyard improvements and modernization towards autonomous vessels and work with port facilities to safely accept autonomous vessels at their piers and wharves. This work was assigned during the November 16 meeting and work continues to integrate and finalize these figures and data for the committee. This task group work satisfies the requirements for §2:2.1.E(1)(a)-(f).

Task Group 6 – No formal report for CY 2022.

### **LADAC Task Group – 7 – Electrification of Aircraft**

The terms of reference and task group structure were not completely established at the writing of this report.

Task Group 7 – First formal report will be delivered in 2024 for CY 2023.