Office of
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Legislators Ask State Leaders to Establish Commercial Drone Delivery Task Force

Task force would evaluate state regulations on commercial delivery drones, recommend policy changes

(BOSTON 10/120/2026) — In response to Amazon Prime Air's proposed drone delivery service expansion into Central Massachusetts, 16 state legislators representing the region sent a letter to Governor Maura Healey, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, and Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell asking them to establish a task force to review the Commonwealth's regulations on commercial delivery drones and make recommendations on necessary policy changes. The lawmakers further ask that the Governor implement a moratorium on the acceptance or processing of any commercial drone delivery operator certificates until a regulatory review and update is completed. The task force and approval moratorium request is the latest in a series of moves from legislators echoing constituent concerns about the noise, flight routes, operating hours, safety, privacy, cybersecurity, and environmental impacts of Amazon's proposed drone operations, including a letter asking Amazon to pause its implementation plan to better engage with the community and a partnership with the state's federal delegation to review national laws on the matter.

Planned to operate out of the company's existing 200,000 square foot Otis Street fulfillment center in Westborough, Amazon Prime Air would be the first service of its kind in New England and would deliver items under 5lbs to Westborough and 15 surrounding communities. Amazon states that it hopes to eventually make up to 1,000 deliveries per day to addresses within a 7.5-mile radius of its fulfillment center.

The letter highlights that Amazon Prime Air likely represents the start of a broader industry trend of commercial drone delivery, with DoorDash receiving the same Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) permit as Amazon for its upcoming DoorDash Air drone delivery service. The food delivery giant announced a DoorDash Air pilot program in Northern California last month and has not yet announced any service in New England, but the lawmakers emphasize states still maintain control over ground operations including the location of takeoff and landing areas. They write, "the Commonwealth should exercise its valid state interest and first plan out takeoff and landing locations rather than merely approve them on an ad hoc basis. This is especially critical given that companies like Amazon are simply upgrading their existing ground distribution sites into ground and air distribution sites – a maneuver that deprives the state of any form of comprehensive planning or say over the location of commercial drone takeoff and landing sites."

"Like my colleagues and our constituents, I share serious and significant concerns regarding the Amazon Prime Air program and future drone delivery programs. Residents of Westborough, Shrewsbury, and many other towns and cities in Central Massachusetts have many questions about how these drones will affect their privacy, local wildlife, public safety, quality of life and property values. And Central Massachusetts is just the beginning - make no mistake - drone delivery once started will spread statewide," said **Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury)**. "Although airspace is under FAA jurisdiction, the potential challenges and disruptions

these drones would impose in the region and across the Commonwealth warrant timely action and thorough investigation at the state level. I encourage Governor Healey to immediately create a task force to examine current state regulations on commercial delivery drones and necessary regulatory updates, and to put a moratorium in place on accepting applications for a certificate from commercial drone delivery operators until this task force's work is complete. Central Massachusetts communities deserve to be heard, to have their well-founded concerns addressed and live in an area free of delivery drones."

"Having an order delivered to your front yard in as little as 30 minutes is a great sales pitch, but the possibility of dozens of commercial drones flying over our neighborhoods day and night prompt important questions about noise levels, safety risks, and privacy impacts. Since airspace is regulated by the FAA, we must use the power that we have over ground-based operations to do what is best for the people we represent," said **Senator Michael Moore (D-Millbury)**. "Amazon Prime Air may be just the beginning of retail and delivery mega-corporations deploying commercial drones for deliveries in the region. The reality is, if these services come to Massachusetts, all of us will have to deal with the disruptions these noisy 5-foot drones bring, whether we use the services or not. Our window to regulate drone delivery services is closing – I'm hopeful that the Governor will recognize the urgency of this issue and create a task force to review how our laws apply to this technology and make recommendations on common-sense regulations to protect our communities."

"The impact of drone delivery has the potential for expansion far beyond this specific site and this specific vendor, raising many questions about whether existing regulations adequately address shared airspace, commercial operations and issues of scale. I am hopeful that a taskforce can shed light on these questions and lead to positive outcomes for our residents," said **Representative Kate Donaghue (D-Westborough)**. "I am thankful to my colleagues, the administration, and the federal delegation for their prompt attention and action on this issue."

Amazon Prime Air currently operates in 13 cities in 10 states, but the company has laid out an aggressive expansion roadmap that intends to serve over 500 communities with drone delivery by the end of the year. Prime Air drones typically fly up to 74 miles per hour and cruise to their destination at between 205 and 370 feet above the ground, before descending to 13 feet to drop the package on the customer's property. Amazon states that the drones are loudest during takeoff and landing, but that the sound at cruising altitude is comparable to an electric toothbrush held at arm's length when heard outdoors.

Designed to operate in wind, rain, and snow, Prime Air drones are said to include redundant propellers that can keep them airborne if one fails. They are equipped with cameras for navigation and collision avoidance, but Amazon claims that all image data is encrypted and that Amazon does not sell or commercially collect data from its flights. These technologies have not proven infallible, however – videos online show Prime Air drones dropping a package into a pool and crashing into a residential apartment building. Additionally, news reports from Texas and Nebraska highlight resident complaints about disruptive noise, with one nearby homeowner likening the constant sound of the drones to a beehive.

Amazon faces a number of hurdles before it can begin launching Prime Air drones in Central Massachusetts. The FAA approved Amazon's permit to operate delivery drones beyond a visual line of sight nationally in 2024, though a recent legal challenge brought by 15 US states may complicate this blanket permit. Locally, the Westborough Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will hear the appeal of the Westborough Building Commissioner's zoning interpretation related to Amazon's site plan application. A September 15th Planning Board meeting began the process, though the dialogue continued into the Board's October 6th meeting. The ZBA is expected to take up the appeal on November 2. If the ZBA upholds the Building Commissioner's interpretation, the Planning Board would then resume consideration of the Site Plan application.

Today's letter was signed by Senators Michael Moore, Robyn Kennedy, James Eldridge, Ryan Fattman, and Peter Durant, and Representatives Hannah Kane, Kate Donaghue, Meghan Kilcoyne, James Arena-DeRosa,

James O’Day, David Muradian, Carmine Gentile, Daniel Donahue, Joseph McKenna, Paul Frost, and David LeBoeuf.

The full letter can be found online here.

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