

Drone Policy in Cities: How Urban Governments Attempt to Regulate a Transformative Technology

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Research on Drone Policy

Drones or uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) continue to be sought by public and private sector entities to conduct an array of activities including aerial photography, land surveying, as well as roof and utility tower inspections. This technology is also used to deliver medical supplies, food, and small packages to customers. Drones can provide various services at a reduced cost and can also play a role in reducing traffic congestion in urban areas.

This presentation addresses some of the legal and policy challenges that confront policymakers in fostering an environment that supports the adoption of UAS in urban settings. Drones pose some interesting challenges for national or federal governments as well as any array of local governments who may be interested in regulating certain aspects of drone operations.

There are Several Legal and Policy Issues to consider as Society Embraces sUAS Commercial Operations

The federal governments play a role in regulating UAS activities related to:

- Airspace
 - FAA airspace regulations can also address some noise issues
- Safety
- Aircraft noise at its source
 - Small UAS are exempt from noise certification.

What roles should state and local governments play in addressing these issues?



Source: Popular Science, March 4, 2013

A Large Market exists for Small UAS Delivery Operations

The FAA projects that the commercial small UAS (sUAS) fleet operations will double by 2024 Source: FAA 2020-2040 Aerospace Forecast

The stars are aligning:

- Technology
- Regulatory environment
- Financially viability-the last mile problem

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has granted Part 135 certificates to several companies:

- Amazon Prime Air, UPS, Walmart, Wing

UAS are critical to supporting the transport of medical supplies

States and Local Government have the Right to Regulate Certain Laws Impacting UAS Operations

Police powers

Privacy

- Trespass

Zoning

- Where can a UAS depart or land?

Noise

- *What noise levels are appropriate in a certain area at a particular time of day?*

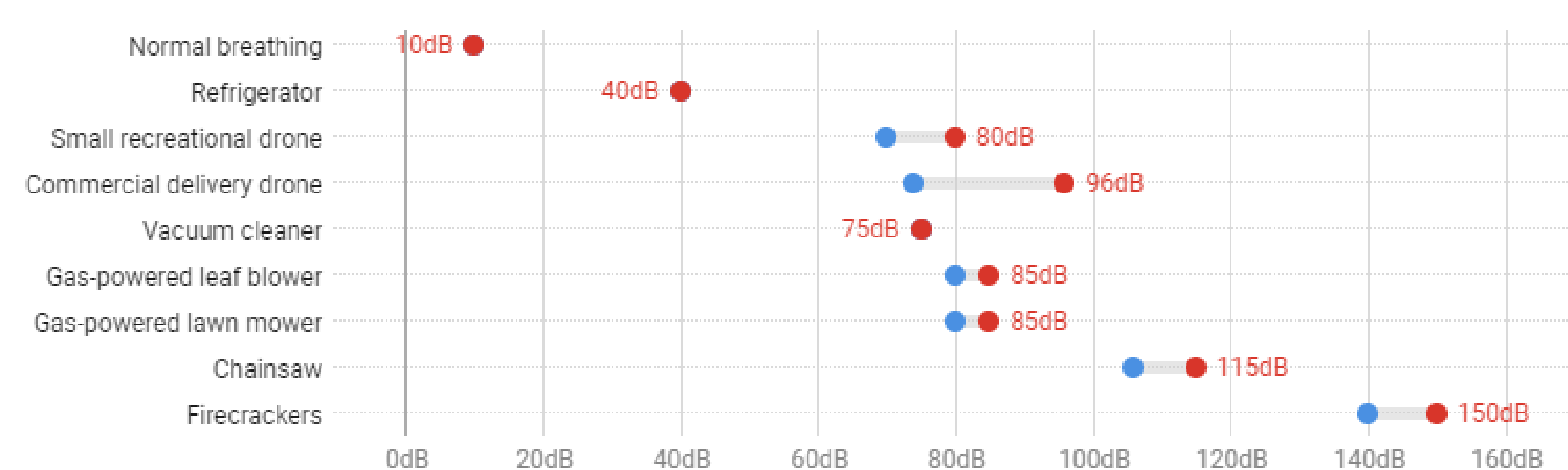


Source: Alphabet's Wing drone delivery service to launch test program in Virginia, CNET, Richard Nieva, September 19, 2019, available at <https://www.cnet.com/news/alphabets-wing-drone-delivery-service-to-launch-pilot-in-virginia/>

What is the Noise about sUAS Operations?

How loud are drones?

The sound generated by recreational and commercial drones, compared with other common household and neighborhood sounds.



Source: Garth Paine, Drones to deliver incessant buzzing noise, and packages, the Conversation, available at <https://theconversation.com/drones-to-deliver-incessant-buzzing-noise-and-packages-116257>, citing Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND Source: U.S. CDC, HealthLink BC, WeTalkUAV, RAND Corp., ACT Parliament, U.S. Patent Office Get the data

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