

Multi-State Law Enforcement Working Group Convened By the New Jersey State Police and Rutgers Miller Center on Policing and Community Resilience

Addresses Wave of Reports of Suspicious Drones

DECEMBER 23, 2024 | NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY – In light of limited information, public speculation, and the spread of conspiracy theories regarding recent drone sightings in the region, the Miller Center for Policing and Community Resilience at Rutgers University convened this past Friday a drone working group from across the northeast U.S. and Canada. The gathering of nearly 50 law enforcement professionals was co-hosted by the New Jersey State Police. The working group shared information, sifted fact from fiction, discussed drone and counter drone-technologies, addressed regulatory issues and the need for federal legislation, and explored online sentiment toward the sightings.

Attendees benchmarked information on daily drone sightings, counter-drone response capability, and the tenor of public sentiment. Discussion also focused on the potential drone threat to critical infrastructure and high-profile events. Specifically, officials discussed risks to the 2026 FIFA World Cup, which will be hosted in cities throughout North America, with the final to be held at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.



Caption: Paul Goldenberg, Chief Policy Advisor, Rutgers Miller Center on Policing and Community Resilience (third from left) and LTC Joe Brennan (ret.), Director of Crime Control and Counterterrorism, NJSP (second from left) brought together law enforcement officials from the northeast U.S. and Canada to discuss a wave of

drone sightings. Monmouth County (NJ) Sheriff Shaun Golden (far left) and Ocean County (NJ) Sheriff Michael Mastronardy (fourth from left) were among the law enforcement leaders representing multi state jurisdictions.

The working group, which will collaborate to develop lessons learned, best practices, and transferrable policies and procedures, aims to prepare law enforcement across the U.S. and Canada for unusual drone sightings.

“It is critical to cut through the noise and hysteria, standardize our approaches, and develop common operating procedures for addressing these unprecedented drone sightings,” **said John Farmer, director of the Miller Center.** “By pooling resources and thought leadership among our law enforcement and academic partners at the Miller Center, the NJSP, and beyond, we expect to be able to draft a collaborative action plan, develop an interagency communication protocol, and identify training needs and equipment priorities.”

“Unmanned Aircraft Systems technology has revolutionized law enforcement, but its true potential is unlocked through the sharing of information,” **said Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police.** “Meetings like this, bringing together multiple law enforcement agencies, are invaluable opportunities to exchange intelligence, share lessons learned, and explore innovative investigative techniques. This collaboration strengthens our collective ability to address emerging threats, enhances operational efficiency, and ensures we provide the highest level of safety and service to the communities we are sworn to protect.”

“Collaboration is the foundation of effective law enforcement. By working together, sharing intelligence, and leveraging each other’s strengths, we enhance our ability to address challenges that no single agency can face alone,” **said Colonel Christopher Paris, Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police.** “When law enforcement agencies unite, we strengthen our collective response and reaffirm our commitment to protecting the communities we serve. Together, we are always stronger.”

“The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey looks forward to working with our regional law enforcement partners through the Rutgers Miller Center on Policing and Community Resilience and our New Jersey State Police to share expertise, best practices and intelligence to combat misinformation and to help advocate for federal regulation as the use of uncrewed aircraft becomes more widespread,” **said Greg Ehrie, chief security officer of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.** “Our infrastructure is part of a larger interconnected network that spans county and state lines, so it is critical to develop common standard operation procedures across jurisdictions to ensure rigorous enforcement.”

“The New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police was privileged to be part of Friday’s working group to discuss drone sightings and related public sentiment,” **said President John Russo, who also serves as the Chief of Police of Rutherford.** “We remain committed to this group and will continue to advocate for more transparency and better legislation in regard to this issue.”

“I thank the Miller Center for hosting the meeting on Friday in New Brunswick,” **said Ocean County (NJ) Sheriff Michael Mastronardy.** “It was a great opportunity to meet face to face with public safety officials to discern facts from fiction. I believe it acknowledges that legislation must be addressed to keep pace with technology.”

Added Monmouth County (NJ) Sheriff Shaun Golden: “We appreciate the leadership of the Rutgers Miller Center and NJSP Colonel Pat Callahan in assembling top law enforcement leaders from around our state to discuss the challenges facing law enforcement when it comes to emerging drone technologies and creating new policy ideas to assist our public safety agencies in doing so.”

“I appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with law enforcement agencies along the East Coast on this issue. By exchanging intelligence and best practices, we enhance our collective ability to effectively address this emerging public safety challenge,” **said Virginia State Police Interim Superintendent Lt. Colonel Matt Hanley.**

The following agencies were represented in the inaugural meeting of the working group:

Connecticut State Police

Delaware State Police

Elizabeth Police Department

Federal Aviation Administration

Maryland State Police

Massachusetts State Police

Monmouth County (NJ) Sheriff’s Office

Naval Weapons Station Earl

Network Contagion Research Institute/Narravance

New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness

New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police

New Jersey State Police

New Jersey Urban Area Security Initiative

New York Police Department

New York State Police

New York/New Jersey Port Authority

Ocean County (NJ) Sheriff's Office

Pennsylvania State Police

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Rutgers Miller Center on Policing and Community Resilience

Virginia State Police