



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

OCT 06 2020

Memorandum

To: Assistant Secretaries
Bureau Heads

From: Secretary 

Subject: Important Update on Secretary's Order 3379 and Blue Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Secretary's Order 3379 (Order) temporarily grounded the Department of the Interior's (Department) drone or Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) fleet for non-emergency operations in order to "better ensure the cybersecurity and supply of American technology of UAS procured for use and operation." Drone operations for emergency purposes, such as fighting wildland fires, measures to prevent an anticipated wildland fire, response to a national or state emergency involving human safety, and human search and rescue have continued under the Order.

Subsequent implementing guidance from the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget (PMB) has offered additional information on what constitutes a Designated UAS, the applicability of the Order to various non-Department entities, and the procedures for obtaining Departmental approval for, or reporting use of, a Designated UAS for an authorized purpose.

While the Order has been in effect, the Department of Defense's Defense Innovation Unit recently finalized its small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) initiative, which is called Blue sUAS. This capability provides secure and trusted sUAS for Federal government operations. I invite you and appropriate staff to look at <https://www.diu.mil/autonomy-blue-suas>, to determine whether those solutions may help meet the Department's needs. These Blue sUAS are available on the General Services Administration schedule and Advantage.

Drones serve important functions to missions of the Department. The Blue sUAS availability may help fulfill these emergency and non-emergency missions and training for such missions, which are consistent with the Department's national security interests. Use of Blue sUAS is exempt from the PMB approval and reporting procedures. For additional questions or information on this issue, do not hesitate to reach out to the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget.