

32

100

STATE SCORE

Scores are on a 100-point scale; maximum points are noted in lower-right corners.

Factors Helping the State Score**20**

20

Task Force or Program Office

The Utah Department of Transportation has a drone program office within its Division of Aeronautics. The program office aims to educate the public about drone technology and encourage commercial drone services.

10

10

Law Vesting Landowners with Air Rights

Utah law expressly provides air rights to landowners, which reduces litigation risk for drone operators.¹

Factors Hindering the State Score**0**

30

Airspace Lease Law

Utah law does not allow public authorities to lease low-altitude airspace above state and local roads. An airspace lease law would allow state or local officials to create drone highways above these roadways.²

0

25

Avigation Easement Law

Utah law does not create an avigation easement, which means drone operators may be subject to nuisance and trespass laws, even if their drones do not disturb people on the ground.

0

10

Sandbox

Utah does not have a drone sandbox. However, in 2023, Governor Spencer Cox signed a law requiring the Utah Department of Transportation to study the designation of drone sandboxes.³

2

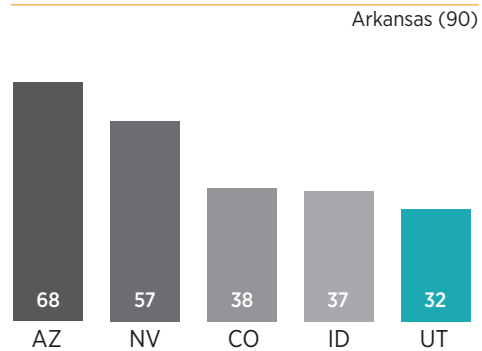
5

Jobs Estimate

Utah is in the fourth quintile when it comes to the number of drone-related jobs per 100,000 people.

Peer State Comparisons by Score

Commercial drone readiness scores vary across the nation. To give state leaders and residents insight into how their state compares, we have provided the scores of four state peers. In this case, these peers are selected because of their geographic and political similarities. (The top line illustrates the top score in 2023.)



Definitions

Airspace Lease Law

States receive points for having laws that allow state and local authorities to lease airspace above public roadways. These laws allow officials in the future to create drone highways safely, away from airports and residential areas.

Avigation Easement Law

States receive points for expressly creating an avigation easement, meaning that drones (and planes) are free to fly over private property as long as they do not disturb those on the ground.

Task Force or Program Office

States receive points if they have an active statewide task force or a program office dedicated to commercial drone services.

Law Vesting Landowners with Air Rights

States receive points for having a law that expressly vests landowners with air rights. This law reduces litigation risk by putting drone operators on notice that drone flights that are too low or disruptive to landowners are not permitted.

Sandbox

States receive points if they have dedicated state facilities and airspace for commercial drone testing.

Jobs Estimate

This score is based on the number of drone jobs per 100,000 people; estimated using ZipRecruiter data.

Notes

1. UTAH CODE ANN. § 76-6-206 (2020).
2. Utah has an airspace lease law that allows UDOT, municipalities, counties, and airport authorities to lease state or municipal property for airport purposes, but it is unclear whether this applies to drones. Utah Code Ann. § 72-10-203 (2019).
3. S.B. 161, 65th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2023) (governor signed March 17, 2023).