2022 DRONE SCORECARD

NORTH CAROLINA

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

Factors Helping the State Score

Avigation Easement Law
North Carolina law creates an avigation easement, which means drone operators are protected from nuisance and trespass laws as long as their drones do not disturb people on the ground.¹

Task Force or Program Office
The state has a drone program office in the Division of Aviation with the goal of promoting economic development and airport safety.²

Law Vesting Landowners with Air Rights
North Carolina law expressly provides air rights to landowners, which reduces litigation risk for drone operators.³

Jobs Estimate
North Carolina is in the middle quintile when it comes to the number of drone-related jobs per 100,000 people.

Factors Hindering the State Score

Airspace Lease Law
North Carolina 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.

Sandbox
North Carolina does not have a drone sandbox. State officials should consider dedicating state facilities and airspace to commercial drone testing.

Please visit www.mercatus.org/dronescorecard for the full research paper and methodology.
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 expressly vesting 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
3. § 63-12.