

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MATT EHLING
BOARD MEMBER
MINNESOTA COALITION ON GOVERNMENT INFORMATION**

**HEARING ON HF 1236
MINNESOTA HOUSE CIVIL LAW COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 27, 2019**

Dear committee members,

As an advocate for public accountability, MNCOGI strongly support the decision by Chair Lesch to include reporting requirements in HF 1236, a bill intended to regulate the use of unmanned "drone" aircraft by law enforcement agencies.

This bill includes provisions that would require the creation and submission of public reports about police drone use - including the number of times the devices have been used on an annual basis, legal thresholds for use, and other matters.

As costs come down - and as these devices becomes smaller - drone use by government will tend to proliferate, raising more questions about where and how to use this technology appropriately. In order for the public - and for this body - to make those determinations, it is necessary to have accurate information about the utilization of these devices.

We believe that Minnesotans should not be subject to surprises when the government implements new and novel technologies, and that is why we support the detailed public reporting requirements contained in this bill. In our view, if a government agency is expending resources on behalf of the public - whether it is a sheriff's office, DHS, or MNDOT - we believe that the public deserves a window into that agency's operations for the purposes of oversight.

In the context of this bill, reporting requirements will ensure that pertinent questions are being asked, and they will also give law enforcement the opportunity to tell its story about the uses of this technological platform.