



# Board Agenda Item 33

DATE: April 7, 2026  
TO: Board of Supervisors  
SUBMITTED BY: John Zaroni, Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator  
SUBJECT: Budget Resolution for Purchase of Drones

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

**Adopt Budget Resolution increasing the FY 2025-26 appropriations and estimated revenues for the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 in the amount of \$65,000 for the purchase of drones for the Sheriff's Office (4/5 vote).**

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. Approval of the recommended action will allow the Sheriff's Office to utilize the excess of US Federal Marshal funds for the purchase of drones for the Sheriff's Office. This item is Countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended action is not approved, the Sheriff's Office will not be able to purchase replacements for the current drones that are outdated and no longer reliable to support deputy sheriffs. This could result in potential safety risks.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The excess US Federal Marshal revenue for FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget within Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator Organization 31114000 will be used to fund the drones. Approval of the recommended action will increase the FY 2025-26 appropriations and estimated revenues in the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 in the amount of \$65,000 for the purchase of the drones.

DISCUSSION:

The Fresno County Sheriff's Office UAS Unit supports patrol operations, search and rescue missions, tactical operations, disaster response, and critical incident management. These platforms provide deputies with real-time aerial intelligence that improves decision making and reduces the need to place personnel in hazardous environments. UAS technology allows deputies to locate suspects, missing persons, and evidence more quickly and safely, particularly in rural terrain, mountainous areas, agricultural fields, and during nighttime operations through the use of thermal imaging. The UAS program is a cost-effective tool that enhances public safety and officer safety while reducing the need for more resource-intensive assets such as helicopter deployment for lower-risk missions. The new drones will be used in a variety of locations including mountainous, rural, urban, and indoor areas. Drones are crucial in policing as force multipliers that enhance officer safety, improve situational awareness, and speed up response times by providing real-time, aerial, and thermal video feeds. The data collected by drones helps in documenting incidents accurately, which strengthens cases. Drones serve as a versatile, rapidly deployable tool that significantly improves

both the efficiency of law enforcement operations and the safety of officers.

The requested drones will replace older / existing aircraft that are approaching end-of-life and are becoming less reliable. Maintaining a modern fleet ensures operational readiness and prevents capability gaps in critical incidents. Due to federal actions, the foreign manufacturing, importation and supply of drones will be affected causing delays or further restrictions preventing the Sheriff- Coroner's from replacing current drones reaching their end of life. Approval of the recommended action will enable the Sheriff-Coroner to purchase drones to replace equipment that is near their end of life or outdated by using the excess revenue from US Marshals fund. The proposed purchase is fully funded through excess U.S. Marshals revenue, resulting in no increase to Net County Cost while ensuring the Sheriff's Office maintains a modern and reliable UAS capability.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Budget Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

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