AKWA IBOM STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

AKWA IBOM STATE AUTONOMOUS TECHNOLOGY ENABLEMENT AND SAFETY LAW BILL, 2026

A BILL

FOR A LAW TO PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE, RESPONSIBLE AND INNOVATIVE DEPLOYMENT OF AUTONOMOUS ROBOTIC AND UNMANNED SYSTEMS IN AKWA IBOM STATE; TO ESTABLISH A STATE REGISTRY AND PROVIDE FOR OPERATIONAL SAFETY, GEO-FENCING, PRODUCT LIABILITY, INSURANCE, DATA PROTECTION, ACCIDENT REPORTING AND PUBLIC SAFETY; AND FOR RELATED MATTERS.

Sponsor: Hon. (Engr.) Uduak-Obong Ekpo-Ufot

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BE IT ENACTED BY the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly as follows-

{Commencement: }

PART I

PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

1. Objectives

The objectives of this Law are to—

(a) establish a safe and responsible framework for autonomous robotics and precision drone operations in Akwa Ibom State;

(b) promote precision agriculture, particularly in the cultivation of cassava, oil palm and other agricultural products;

(c) encourage industrial automation and advanced manufacturing;

(d) promote drone-enabled logistics and delivery services;

(e) protect persons, property and the environment from risks associated with autonomous systems;

(f) establish a State-level registry for relevant commercial autonomous systems;

(g) establish geofencing and protected operational zones within areas falling under State regulatory competence;

(h) establish clear principles for liability arising from autonomous system failures;

(i) require appropriate insurance for specified commercial operations;

(j) establish cybersecurity, data protection and operational safety requirements;

(k) promote local research, development and manufacturing; and

(l) provide a regulatory environment that encourages innovation while protecting public safety.

2. Scope of Application

(1) This Law applies to—

(a) commercial low-altitude autonomous drone operations- within the State, to the extent that State regulation is lawful and subject to applicable Federal aviation requirements,

(c) mapping and surveying drones;

(d) delivery drones;

(e) industrial inspection drones;

(f) autonomous agricultural rovers;

(g) autonomous harvesting and picking systems;

(h) industrial robotic systems;

(i) autonomous ground vehicles;

(j) robotic systems deployed in State-owned or State-controlled facilities; and

(k) other autonomous systems designated by regulation.

(2) Nothing in this Law shall be construed as conferring on the State powers over—

(a) national airspace;

(b) civil aviation safety;

(c) aircraft certification;

(d) aircraft registration;

(e) aviation personnel licensing;

(f) air navigation services; or

(g) any other matter reserved to the Federal Government.

(3) A drone operator shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Civil Aviation Act 2022, the Nigeria Civil Aviation Regulations and directives of the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority.

PART II-

ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

3. Establishment of Autonomous Robotics and Drone Operations Authority

There is established an Akwa Ibom State Autonomous Robotics and Drone Operations Authority.The Governor may designate an existing Ministry, Department, Agency or State technology institution to perform the functions of the Authority.

4. Functions of the Authority

The Authority shall—

(a) coordinate State-level autonomous system operations;

(b) maintain records of registered commercial operators;

(c) establish State operational zones;

(d) coordinate geofencing information;

(e) develop safety standards;

(f) oversee compliance with this Law;

(g) coordinate incident reporting;

(h) promote insurance and liability compliance;

(i) facilitate agricultural and industrial drone deployment;

(j) establish a regulatory sandbox;

(k) promote research and innovation;

(l) advise the Government on autonomous technology policy; and

(m) cooperate with relevant Federal authorities.

5. Advisory Committee

The Governor shall establish an Advisory Committee, comprising representatives of—

(a) Ministry responsible for Science and Technology;

(b) Ministry responsible for Agriculture;

(c) Ministry responsible for Transport;

(d) Ministry responsible for Environment;

(e) State emergency management authorities;

(f) relevant security agencies;

(g) technology industry;

(h) universities and research institutions;

(i) agricultural stakeholders; and

(j) such other persons as may be prescribed.

PART III-

PRECISION DRONE OPERATIONS

6. State Registry of Autonomous Robotic and Drone Operations

There shall be established a State Registry of Autonomous Robotics and Precision Drone Operations.

The Registry shall contain—

(a) operator identity;

(b) system identification;

(c) relevant Federal registration or approval information;

(d) operating category;

(e) insurance information;

(f) designated operating areas;

(g) emergency contact information; and

(h) such other information as may be prescribed.

7. Registration of Operators and Autonomous Systems

A person shall not conduct a commercial autonomous robotics or precision drone operation requiring registration under this Law unless registered with the Authority.Registration under this Law shall not replace any Federal registration, certification or operational approval required by law.

8. State Coordination of Commercial Drone Operations

The Authority shall establish procedures for coordinating commercial drone activities conducted over or from—

(a) State-owned land;

(b) public agricultural estates;

(c) State facilities;

(d) public infrastructure;

(e) designated industrial zones; and

(f) other areas within State regulatory competence.

9. Low-Altitude Operations Coordination Framework

The Authority may establish a State-level coordination framework for commercial low-altitude drone operations, including—

(a) designated operating areas;

(b) temporary restrictions;

(c) geofencing information;

(d) emergency landing zones;

(e) notification mechanisms; and

(f) coordination with the NCAA and other relevant authorities

10. Geofencing Requirements

A commercial autonomous drone operator shall, where technically required by applicable standards—

(a) maintain current geofencing data;

(b) incorporate applicable restricted zones;

(c) prevent unauthorised entry into designated State protected areas;

(d) maintain an emergency return or landing function where appropriate; and

(e) update navigation databases when notified of material changes.

11. Restricted and Protected Zones

The Authority may designate areas within State competence as protected zones, including—

(a) State government facilities;

(b) prisons and correctional facilities;

(c) critical utility installations;

(d) emergency response facilities;

(e) protected environmental areas;

(f) major public events;

(g) schools and sensitive public facilities where appropriate;

(h) critical infrastructure; and

(i) other areas prescribed by regulation.

Such designation shall not override restrictions imposed under Federal aviation or national-security law.

12. Safe Operating Corridors

The Authority may establish designated drone corridors for—

(a) agricultural spraying;

(b) medical deliveries;

(c) logistics;

(d) surveying;

(e) environmental monitoring;

(f) infrastructure inspection; and

(g) other approved purposes.

13. Autonomous Beyond-Visual-Line-of-Sight Operations

No person shall conduct autonomous BVLOS operations in circumstances requiring Federal authorisation without obtaining the applicable Federal approval.

The Authority may impose additional State requirements concerning land use, emergency response, public safety and data protection.

14. Drone Identification and Tracking

Registered commercial drones shall, where technically feasible and required by regulation, carry—

(a) unique identification;

(b) electronic identification or remote identification;

(c) operator information;

(d) emergency contact information; and

(e) tracking functionality appropriate to the risk category.

15. Payload and Delivery Operations

A commercial autonomous drone carrying a payload shall—

(a) comply with applicable aviation and dangerous-goods requirements;

(b) maintain appropriate payload security;

(c) prevent accidental release;

(d) maintain accurate delivery records; and

(e) comply with applicable data and consumer-protection laws.

16. Agricultural Drone Operations

Agricultural drone operators shall comply with applicable requirements relating to—

(a) pesticides;

(b) agricultural chemicals;

(c) environmental protection;

(d) human exposure;

(e) water sources;

(f) livestock;

(g) neighbouring farms; and

(h) protected ecological areas.

PART IV

AUTONOMOUS ROBOTICS

17. Registration of Autonomous Robotic Systems

Commercial autonomous robotic systems designated by regulation shall be registered where their operation presents material risks to—

(a) persons;

(b) property;

(c) agriculture;

(d) public infrastructure;

(e) the environment; or

(f) public safety.

18. Safety-by-Design Requirements

An operator shall ensure that an autonomous robotic system is designed and deployed with appropriate safeguards proportionate to its risk.

19. Human Oversight and Manual Override

A high-risk autonomous system shall have—

(a) an emergency stop mechanism;

(b) appropriate human oversight;

(c) a safe-failure mode;

(d) manual override where reasonably practicable; and

(e) procedures for emergency intervention.

20. Autonomous Agricultural and Industrial Operations

Autonomous agricultural and industrial systems shall operate only within designated or authorised areas and shall incorporate appropriate safety controls.

21. Robotic Navigation and Operating Zones

The Authority may designate zones for—

(a) autonomous agriculture;

(b) industrial robotics;

(c) research;

(d) testing;

(e) logistics; and

(f) commercial deployment.

22. Cybersecurity Requirements

Operators shall implement appropriate cybersecurity measures to prevent—

(a) unauthorised access;

(b) remote hijacking;

(c) malicious software;

(d) unauthorised modification;

(e) manipulation of navigation systems; and

(f) compromise of operational controls.

23. Software and Firmware Updates

Operators shall maintain appropriate security updates and shall not knowingly continue operating systems with critical unmitigated vulnerabilities where reasonable remediation is available.

24. Incident Logging and Data Recording

Commercial autonomous systems shall maintain appropriate records of—

(a) operational activity;

(b) material system errors;

(c) safety incidents;

(d) emergency overrides;

(e) significant deviations from planned routes; and

(f) such other events as may be prescribed.

PART V

PRODUCT LIABILITY, ACCIDENTS AND INSURANCE

25. Apportionment of Liability

Where an autonomous system causes damage, liability shall be determined having regard to the cause of the failure.

(1) The manufacturer may be liable where the harm resulted from—

(a) manufacturing defects;

(b) defective hardware;

(c) unsafe design;

(d) known defects not properly addressed; or

(e) failure to provide required safety updates.

(2) The developer may be liable where harm resulted from—

(a) defective software;

(b) unsafe algorithmic decision-making;

(c) faulty navigation logic;

(d) defective control software; or

(e) failure to correct known software defects.

(3) The operator may be liable where harm resulted from—

(a) negligent operation;

(b) failure to maintain the system;

(c) failure to implement required updates;

(d) misuse;

(e) failure to observe operational restrictions; or

(f) failure to execute an available emergency intervention.

26. Manufacturer Liability

A manufacturer shall be responsible for defects attributable to the design, manufacture or safety configuration of an autonomous system, subject to applicable product-liability law.

27. Developer Liability

A developer shall be responsible for material software defects attributable to the development, modification or configuration of an autonomous system where the developer knew or ought reasonably to have known of the defect.

28. Operator Liability

An operator shall be responsible for negligent, reckless or unauthorised operation of an autonomous system.

29. Shared and Contributory Liability

Where two or more persons contributed to the harm, liability shall be apportioned according to their respective contribution to the damage.

This is preferable to an absolute "manufacturer/developer/operator" liability model because complex autonomous systems can involve multiple parties.

30. Mandatory Third-Party Insurance

A commercial operator shall maintain appropriate third-party liability insurance where required by regulation.

For autonomous drones and robotic systems exceeding prescribed weight, risk or operational thresholds, insurance shall be mandatory.The Authority may establish different insurance requirements according to—

(a) system weight;

(b) payload;

(c) operating environment;

(d) number of systems;

(e) proximity to people;

(f) potential severity of harm; and

(g) commercial purpose.

31. Compensation for Persons and Property

A person suffering injury, death, property damage or other legally recognised loss as a result of a regulated autonomous operation may seek compensation in accordance with applicable law.

32. Accident and Incident Reporting

An operator shall promptly report a serious accident or incident involving—

(a) death;

(b) serious injury;

(c) substantial property damage;

(d) environmental damage;

(e) loss of control;

(f) unauthorised flight into a protected area; or

(g) compromise of critical infrastructure.

PART VI

DATA, PRIVACY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

33. Data Collection by Autonomous Systems

Operators shall collect only data reasonably necessary for the operation or legitimate purpose of the autonomous system.

34. Protection of Personal and Sensitive Data

Where an autonomous system collects personal data, the operator shall comply with applicable Nigerian data-protection law.

35. Recording and Retention of Operational Data

Operators shall retain relevant operational logs for a period prescribed by regulation, particularly following an accident or serious incident.

36. Surveillance Restrictions

No autonomous drone or robotic system shall be deliberately deployed for unlawful surveillance, harassment or unauthorised collection of private information.

37. Cybersecurity and Protection Against Hijacking

Operators shall implement reasonable technical and organisational measures against remote takeover, spoofing, jamming, malware and other cyber threats.

39. Prohibition of Malicious Autonomous Operations

A person shall not intentionally use an autonomous drone or robotic system to—

(a) cause injury;

(b) damage property;

(c) disrupt critical infrastructure;

(d) facilitate unlawful activity;

(e) deliver prohibited materials; or

(f) interfere with emergency operations.

PART VII

PROCUREMENT, CERTIFICATION AND STANDARDS

40. State Procurement Requirements

A State institution procuring autonomous systems shall consider—

(a) safety;

(b) cybersecurity;

(c) maintenance;

(d) insurance;

(e) vendor support;

(f) data protection;

(g) interoperability; and

(h) total lifecycle cost.

41. Certification and Safety Assessment

The Authority may require risk-based certification or safety assessment for specified classes of autonomous systems.Federal certification requirements shall remain applicable.

42. Approved Testing and Inspection Bodies

The Authority may recognise competent laboratories, testing organisations and technical assessors.

43. Supply-Chain Security

Suppliers shall disclose material information concerning—

(a) manufacturer;

(b) system origin;

(c) software components;

(d) known vulnerabilities;

(e) security-support lifecycle;

(f) maintenance requirements; and

(g) material cybersecurity risks.

44. Maintenance and End-of-Life Requirements

Operators shall maintain autonomous systems in safe operating condition and shall retire systems that can no longer be operated safely.

PART VIII

REGULATORY SANDBOX AND INNOVATION

45. Autonomous Systems Regulatory Sandbox

The Authority shall establish an Akwa Ibom Autonomous Robotics and Drone Regulatory Sandbox.

The Sandbox shall support—

(a) precision agriculture;

(b) palm-oil monitoring;

(c) cassava production;

(d) environmental monitoring;

(e) medical logistics;

(f) industrial inspection;

(g) mapping;

(h) disaster response; and

(i) local robotics development.

46. Research and Development Exemption

The Authority may provide limited exemptions for controlled research, testing and academic projects subject to appropriate safety safeguards.

47. Agricultural and Industrial Innovation Zones

The Government may designate areas where approved autonomous technologies may be tested under controlled conditions.

48. Support for Local Manufacturing

The Government may provide incentives, subject to applicable law and budgetary approval, for—

(a) local drone assembly;

(b) robotics development;

(c) agricultural automation;

(d) software development;

(e) sensor manufacturing;

(f) repair and maintenance;

(g) training; and

(h) research and development.

PART IX

OFFENCES, PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT

49. Unregistered Autonomous Operations

A person who conducts a commercial operation requiring State registration without registration commits an offence. Fines for individuals will vary in amounts up to ₦2,000,000 and for Corporate entities, up to **₦10,000,000** including suspension of the operation until registration.

50. Prohibited Operations

A person who deliberately conducts an autonomous operation in a prohibited area or in violation of a lawful Federal restriction commits an offence and is liable to—

Individual: up to **₦5,000,000** or confinement up to two years, or both.

Corporate entity: up to **₦20,000,000**.

51. Unauthorized Operation in Protected Zones

(a) A person who knowingly operates an autonomous system within a State-designated protected zone without authorisation shall be liable to—

Individual: up to **₦5,000,000**

Corporate entity: up to **₦15,000,000**.

(b) Where the operation threatens a critical facility, the penalty may increase to **₦30,000,000** for a corporate entity.

52. Interference with Critical Infrastructure

A person who knowingly uses an autonomous system to interfere with electricity, telecommunications, water, transport, healthcare or other critical infrastructure commits a serious offence.

Penalty

Individual: up to ₦20,000,000 or confinement up to seven years, or both.

Corporate entity: up to ₦50,000,000, without prejudice to other applicable criminal liability.

53. Failure to Maintain Insurance

A commercial operator required to maintain insurance who operates without valid coverage is liable to—

Individual: ₦1,000,000

Corporate entity: ₦5,000,000

and suspension of operations until insurance is obtained.

54. Failure to Report Accident or Incident

A person who knowingly fails to report a reportable accident or serious incident commits an offence and is liable to—

Individual: up to ₦2,000,000

Corporate entity: up to ₦10,000,000.

55. Tampering with Identification or Tracking Systems

A person who intentionally—

(a) removes required identification;

(b) falsifies system identity;

(c) disables required tracking;

(d) manipulates operational logs; or

(e) interferes with required safety systems,

commits an offence and is liable to—

Individual: up to ₦10,000,000 or imprisonment up to three years, or both.

Corporate entity: up to ₦30,000,000.

56. Reckless or Negligent Autonomous Operations

A person who operates an autonomous system recklessly or negligently and thereby causes serious injury, substantial property damage or environmental harm commits an offence.

The Court may impose—

(a) a fine;

(b) compensation;

(c) suspension of operations;

(d) forfeiture of the autonomous system; and

(e) such other lawful remedy as appropriate.

59. Administrative Sanctions

The Authority may impose—

(a) warning;

(b) compliance notice;

(c) mandatory safety assessment;

(d) suspension;

(e) withdrawal of State registration;

(f) administrative monetary penalty;

(g) procurement suspension;

(h) debarment from State contracts; or

(i) referral to a competent authority.

57. Corporate Liability

Where an offence is committed by a company, a director, manager or responsible officer who authorised, permitted or knowingly failed to prevent the offence may be personally liable where the applicable legal requirements are satisfied.

58. Continuing Offences

Where a person continues to operate in breach of a lawful compliance order, an additional penalty of up to ₦500,000 per day may be imposed until compliance.

59. Aggravating and Mitigating Circumstances

In determining sanctions, consideration shall be given to—

(a) severity of harm;

(b) intent;

(c) negligence;

(d) previous violations;

(e) financial benefit;

(f) number of persons affected;

(g) cooperation with authorities;

(h) voluntary disclosure; and

(i) remedial action.

60. Appeals and Judicial Review

A person affected by an administrative decision under this Law may appeal in accordance with regulations and may seek judicial review by a competent court.

PART X

FEES, FINANCE AND MISCELLANEOUS

61. Fees, Charges and Cost Recovery

(1) The Authority may prescribe reasonable fees for—

(a) State registration;

(b) operating permits where legally permissible;

(c) safety assessment;

(d) certification;

(e) inspection;

(f) technical testing;

(g) sandbox participation; and

(h) other regulatory services.

(2)Initial Fee Framework

Service	**Recommended Maximum**
Research/academic registration	**Nil**
Basic commercial drone registration	**₦100,000**
Commercial autonomous operator registration	**₦250,000**
High-risk autonomous system registration	**₦500,000**
Fleet registration	**₦500,000–₦1,500,000**
Safety assessment	**₦250,000–₦1,000,000**
Annual renewal	**50% of initial fee**
SME/start-up sandbox	**Nil**
University/research sandbox	**Nil**
Large commercial sandbox	**Cost recovery**
Specialist technical assessment	**Actual reasonable cost**

62. Autonomous Robotics and Drone Innovation Fund

Subject to applicable public-finance laws, the Government may establish a fund or budgetary mechanism to support—

(a) precision agriculture;

(b) robotics research;

(c) drone technology;

(d) local manufacturing;

(e) skills development;

(f) regulatory technology;

(g) safety testing;

(h) innovation competitions; and

(i) research institutions.

63. Regulations

The Authority may make regulations concerning—

(a) registration;

(b) operating categories;

(c) geofencing;

(d) protected zones;

(e) insurance;

(f) autonomous robotics;

(g) safety assessment;

(h) data management;

(i) incident reporting;

(j) fees;

(k) sandbox operations; and

(l) other matters necessary to give effect to this Law.

64. Cooperation with Federal Authorities

The Authority shall cooperate with the NCAA, NAMA, relevant security agencies, environmental authorities and other competent Federal institutions.

65. Confidentiality

A person performing functions under this Law shall protect confidential commercial, security and operational information obtained in the performance of official duties.

66. Transitional Provisions

Existing operators shall have **12 months** from commencement to comply with the applicable State requirements. The Authority may grant additional time where immediate compliance is not technically practicable and the operator presents an acceptable compliance plan.

67. Limitation of Liability

No officer acting in good faith in the lawful performance of functions under this Law shall be personally liable for an act or omission arising from the performance of those functions.

68. Savings

Nothing in this Law shall invalidate or affect any approval, license, contract, intellectual property right, obligation, offence, penalty or liability created under the Act of the National Assembly.

69. Interpretation

In this Law—

"autonomous robotic system" means a machine or system capable of performing tasks with a degree of autonomy without continuous direct human control;

"authority" means the Autonomous Robotics and Drone Operations Authority established under section 6;

"autonomous drone" means an unmanned aircraft capable of performing flight functions with limited or no continuous direct human control;

"autonomous robotic system" includes an autonomous rover, harvesting machine, industrial robot or autonomous ground vehicle;

"critical infrastructure" includes electricity, telecommunications, water, transportation, healthcare, emergency services and other infrastructure designated by law.

“BVLOS” means Beyond Visual Line of Sight;

"drone" includes an unmanned aircraft system or remotely piloted aircraft system, subject to applicable Federal law;

"geofencing" means the use of software, navigation data or other technical controls to restrict or modify the operation of an autonomous system within a defined geographical area;

"operator" means a person or entity responsible for the operation or deployment of an autonomous system;

"precision drone" means a drone deployed for specialised agricultural, surveying, mapping, inspection, delivery, environmental or other defined purposes;

"protected zone" means an area designated under this Law or applicable Federal law within which autonomous operations are prohibited or restricted;

“NCAA” means Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority.

“NAMA” means Nigerian Airspace Management Agency.

70. Short Title

This Law may be cited as the Akwa Ibom State Autonomous Robotics and Precision Drone Operations Law, 2026.

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE 1

CATEGORIES OF AUTONOMOUS OPERATIONS

Category A — Low-Risk

Examples:

i. academic research;
ii. controlled agricultural trials;
iii. indoor robotics;
iv. non-commercial testing.

Category B — Commercial

Examples:

i. agricultural surveying;
ii. mapping;
iii. plantation monitoring;
iv. commercial photography;
v. infrastructure inspection;
vi. logistics.

Category C — High-Risk

Examples:

i. autonomous operations near populated areas;
ii. heavy-payload drones;
iii. hazardous-material operations;
iv. critical infrastructure inspection;
v. autonomous systems capable of causing significant physical harm.

SCHEDULE 2

MINIMUM SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

A regulated autonomous system shall have:

1. Unique identification.
2. Secure communications.
3. Appropriate encryption.
4. Emergency stop or landing capability.
5. Manual override where practicable.
6. Geofencing capability.
7. Navigation integrity controls.
8. Collision avoidance appropriate to the risk.
9. Operational logging.
10. Software and firmware update capability.
11. Cybersecurity protections.
12. Maintenance records.
13. Incident reporting capability.
14. Appropriate insurance.
15. Defined end-of-life procedures.

Potential revenue streams include:

1. registration fees;
2. certification fees;
3. technical assessment fees;
4. inspection fees;
5. commercial operating fees where legally permissible;
6. sandbox fees for large commercial operators.