

Policy on Individual Participation in Meetings of the Unmanned Systems Commission by Electronic Means under Va. Code § 2.2-3708.1

It is the policy of the Unmanned Systems Commission (“UMS Commission”) that individual members of the UMS Commission may participate in meetings of the UMS Commission, including committee and working group meetings, by electronic means to the extent permitted by Section 2.2-3708.1 of the Code of Virginia. This policy shall apply to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the members requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting. This policy applies to all committees, subcommittees, and working groups of the UMS Commission.

Whenever an individual member wishes to participate from a remote location, the law requires a quorum of the UMS Commission to be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location, and arrangements for the voice of the remote participant to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location. The reason that the member is unable to attend the meeting and the remote location from which the member participates will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

When such individual participation is due to an emergency or personal matter, such participation is limited by law to two meetings or twenty-five percent of the meetings of the public body per member each calendar year, whichever is fewer. When such individual participation is due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition, the law does not provide for such a limitation on frequency.

Individual participation from a remote location shall be automatically approved unless such participation would violate this policy or the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. If a member believes that an individual’s participation from a remote location would violate this policy or the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, the member should seek advice from legal counsel. If legal advice does not resolve the member’s concern, the member may call for a ruling by the Chair of the UMS Commission or a vote of the members of the UMS Commission to approve or disapprove the individual’s participation from a remote location. If a member’s participation from a remote location is disapproved, such disapproval shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity as to the nature of the request and the reason for the refusal.

This policy was adopted by the UMS Commission at its meeting on November 5, 2015.