

Did Berkeley Just Save Us From Drones or Target Us With Drones?

By David Swanson. Reprinted from War is a Crime.org.

Cities and states across the United States have been taking various actions against drones, while the federal government rolls ahead with project fill the skies.

Robert L. Meola has been working for years now to get Berkeley to catch up with other localities and claim its usual spot at the forefront of movements to pass good resolutions on major issues. Now Berkeley has acted and Meola says “This is NOT what I/we asked for.”

Here’s what they asked for:

Establishing a Two Year Moratorium on Drones in Berkeley

From: Peace and Justice Commission

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution adopting a two year moratorium on drones in Berkeley.

Financial Implications: Unknown

And what they got:

Action: 11 speakers. M/S/C (Bates/Maio) to: 1) adopt a one-year moratorium on the use of unmanned aircraft systems, or “drones” by the Berkeley Police Department, 2) ask the Council to develop a policy for police use of drones, and 3) to authorize the use of drones by the Berkeley Fire Department for disaster response purposes. **Vote:** Ayes – Maio, Moore, Anderson, Arreguin, Capitelli, Wengraf, Bates; Noes – Droste; Abstain – Worthington.

Meola responds:

“They adopted a ONE year moratorium on POLICE use of drones. The police have not been interested in getting a drone, according to the last official word from the chief. But they AUTHORIZED use by the Fire Department, who also has not asked to have a drone. And if they get one, will it ONLY be used by the Fire Dept. for disaster response purposes??—Maybe. And they say they will develop a policy for Police USE of drones. How nice of them. We have asked for NO DRONES, NO POLICE USE OF DRONES, and their moratorium entails coming up with a policy **for** POLICE USE OF DRONES while they still haven’t tackled the issues around a comprehensive drone policy for Berkeley. I spoke. Others spoke. The ACLU spoke. The Mayor is slick. He started out saying two years and ended up with one. They had a whole list of exceptions that got exchanged for this crappy policy.

“So, if no one is paying attention to the details, **the propaganda sounds good: BERKELEY PASSES ONE YEAR MORATORIUM ON DRONES** Wow! Groovy! Better maybe not to have done anything! Kriss Worthington abstained because this doesn’t sound better than doing nothing once you read the details of what they actually passed.

“They ignored all the good stuff in our recommendation re not using info obtained by a drone in state and federal criminal investigations without a valid warrant based on probable cause. They ignored asking the state to establish a two year moratorium.

“My time would be better spent organizing for Nonviolent Anarchist Revolution, don’t you think? Instead I am asking for them to make a law! And this is the result! HELP!

“No faith n the system, not even in Berkeley.

“LONG LIVE ANARCHY!”

Hey, Berkeley, your people sure seem to love you. I’ve received several emails today from random people in Berkeley

on the theme of how useless your Police Review Commission is.
And I live nowhere near Berkeley and hadn't inquired.

Wouldn't keeping killer spy robots out of the skies have been
an easy way to do something positive?