Coast Guard to Invest $350M in Robotics, Autonomous Systems

From Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, Sept. 24, 2025

WASHINGTON — The Coast Guard announced Wednesday it will invest nearly $350 million to expand robotics and autonomous systems, strengthening mission execution and operational capabilities.

The funding, provided under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), includes $11 million in fiscal year 2025 for immediate upgrades to critical autonomous systems.

Initial investments include:

- $4.8 million to procure 16 VideoRay Defender remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) to replace Deployable Specialized Forces' aging fleet.

- $2 million to procure six Qinetiq Squad Packable Utility Robot (SPUR) and 12 mini-SPUR robots to replace outdated unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) at Strike Teams.

- $4.3 million to purchase 125 SkyDio X10D short-range unmanned aircraft systems (SR-UAS).

These investments are the first in a series of robotics and autonomous systems projects the Coast Guard will pursue using OBBBA funding. The technologies will meet immediate mission needs, improve personnel safety and strengthen the Coast

Guard’s capabilities to control, secure, and defend U.S. borders and maritime approaches.

“These unmanned systems provide increased domain awareness, mitigating risk and enhancing mission success as the Coast Guard continues to operate in hazardous environments,” said Anthony Antognoli, the Coast Guard’s first RAS program executive officer. “The Coast Guard’s mission demands agility, awareness and adaptability. Robotics and autonomous systems deliver all three, enabling us to respond faster, operate smarter and extend our reach where it matters most. We are not waiting for the future to arrive. We are delivering it to the fleet today.”

The Coast Guard’s Deployable Specialized Forces will use the new ROVs for waterfront and pier inspections, hull assessments, subsurface infrastructure surveys, disaster response and search and rescue missions. Their use will reduce reliance on Coast Guard divers, improving efficiency and safety.

Coast Guard Strike Teams, which respond to hazardous materials spills, major marine casualties, groundings, natural disasters, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incidents and national special security events, will use the new UGVs to access and sample air in confined spaces aboard commercial vessels.

The SR-UAS will support operations including infrastructure inspections, environmental observation, pollution response, post-storm surveys, ice surveys and communications.

The Program Executive Office for Robotics and Autonomous Systems is part of the Coast Guard’s Force Design 2028 plan, which aims to fully integrate capabilities across the service. Focused on four campaigns – people, organization, contracting and acquisition and technology – Force Design 2028 is an accelerated effort to establish a blueprint for change and

transform the Coast Guard into a more agile, capable, and responsive force.