



## Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

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Good Afternoon!

*As we approach the 100-day mark for the second Trump administration, there is plenty of space policy news. Jared Issacman told the Senate during his confirmation hearing that NASA can pursue parallel moon and Mars missions without a budget increase, while the Maryland congressional delegation has lined up to oppose proposed cuts to NASA's science budget. Across the Atlantic, NATO is considering moving up a planned 2027 review of its space policy due to rapid changes in the space domain.*

*All this and more in this edition of Akin's Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update.*

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### Akin Spotlight

Akin's [Trump Executive Order Tracker](#) provides a high-level overview of executive orders published by the new administration. These orders cut across dozens of industries and topics. The Tracker is updated as orders and Akin's in-depth analysis of specific orders are published.

Please visit Akin's [Trump Executive Order Overview](#) to view a matrix of the orders

### On The Hill

#### Articles and Quotes

##### [Maryland Congressmen Vow to Block Proposed NASA Science Budget Cuts](#) (SpaceNews)

Maryland Democrats Senator Chris Van Hollen and Representatives Steny Hoyer and Glenn Ivey pledged to oppose proposed Trump administration cuts of 50% to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Science Mission Directorate, citing national security and competition with China. Speaking outside Goddard Space Flight Center, the legislators warned the cuts could severely impact the center and U.S. leadership in space. Van Hollen, Ranking

Member of the Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee expressed optimism that Republicans will join efforts to combat the proposal.

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## Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-CO) has reintroduced the Accessing Satellite Capabilities to Enable New Discoveries (ASCEND) Act (S. 1437), which aims to formally codify NASA's Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition (CSDA) program.

*Please find our Space Legislation Tracker [here](#).*

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## Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(Apr 18, 2025 - May 2, 2025)

On April 9, the Senate Committee on Science, Space, and Transportation held a hearing to consider the nomination of Jared Isaacman to be NASA Administrator.

On April 29 at 4:45 p.m. ET, the Senate Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee will receive a closed briefing on space superiority.

Both chambers of Congress are in recess until April 28, 2025.

## In the White House/Executive Branch

## Articles and Quotes

### White House Proposal Would Slash NASA Science Budget and Cancel Major Missions (*SpaceNews*)

A draft 2026 budget proposal from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) would cut the NASA Science Mission Directorate's budget by nearly 50%, canceling major missions like the Roman Space Telescope and Mars Sample Return. The proposal, known as a passback, contradicts recent statements by nominee for NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman, who pledged strong support for science. Several lawmakers and scientific organizations have strongly condemned the proposal, warning it may harm U.S. leadership in Earth and space science. Critics further say the cuts risk long-term damage to national security, innovation and ongoing missions.

### **Isaacman Insists NASA Can Pursue Moon and Mars Goals Simultaneously** *(Space Policy Online)*

At his confirmation hearing, nominee for NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman told Senators the agency can pursue Moon and Mars missions in parallel, without a budget increase. Isaacman committed to continued International Space Station (ISS) operations through 2030 and asserted that there should not be a gap between ISS decommissioning and the start of commercial space station operations. He also identified maintaining low Earth orbit operations posture over China as a priority for the agency.

### **From Support To ‘Warfighting’: Space Force Releases First ‘Capstone’ Operations Doctrine** *(Breaking Defense)*

The Space Force has released Space Force Doctrine Document 1 (SFDD-1), formally prioritizing space warfare over traditional support functions. The doctrine, authored by Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman, defines the Force’s mission as achieving space superiority through force or threat of force “in, from, and to” space. The document further outlines core functions like deterring attacks on friendly space capabilities, targeting adversarial space capabilities, undermining adversarial strategy and providing a space-enabled combat edge to terrestrial forces.

### **Tournear Reinstated as SDA Director After Investigation** *(Air and Space Forces)*

Derek Tournear will return as Director of the Space Development Agency (SDA) following a personnel investigation tied to a disputed contract award. Tournear has been on leave since January. His reinstatement comes as SDA faces scrutiny over its independence, including its role in the proposed “Golden Dome” missile defense initiative. A Department of Defense review is underway to assess whether SDA should remain semi-autonomous or integrate into other Space Force offices

### **Space Force Official: Trump’s Executive Order Validates Current Commercial Strategy** *(SpaceNews)*

The Trump administration’s April 9 **executive order** directing the Department of Defense to prioritize commercial technologies aligns with existing Space Force procurement reforms, according to Commercial Space Office (COMSO) head Col. Richard Kniseley. Despite progress, he noted budget rigidities and staffing shortfalls remain key barriers. Congress has provided \$90 million across fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025 to support commercial space services procurement.

## **Federal Agency Space News**

### **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**

#### **NASA to Host Webinar with Small Business Administration Leadership** (April 14, 2025)

#### **NASA’s First Flight with Crew Important Step on Long-term Return to the Moon, Missions to Mars** (April 8, 2025)

## Office of the Director of National Intelligence

[DNI Gabbard Establishes Task Force to Restore Trust in the Intelligence Community and End Weaponization of Government Against Americans](#) (April 8, 2025)

## U.S. Space Force

[Saltzman Details Space Force's International Partnership Strategy at Space Symposium](#) (April 10, 2025)

[USSF Launches Orbital Watch, Strengthens US Commercial Space Industry](#) (April 10, 2025)

[USSF Releases New Capstone Doctrine](#) (April 9, 2025)

[The Department of Defense Announces Deferred Resignation Program](#) (April 7, 2025)

## International

### Articles & Quotes

[NATO Considers Reopening Space Policy Ahead of Schedule](#) (*Payload*)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is considering revisiting its 2019 Space Policy ahead of the scheduled 2027 review, with discussions expected at the June 2025 summit in The Hague. Officials cite rapid developments in the space domain and growing demand for commercial integration. A new Commercial Space Strategy is set to debut this year, supported by a five-phase implementation plan. NATO, which relies on member nations' assets, aims to lead in operationalizing commercial space capabilities for defense.

[Bangladesh Becomes 54th Nation to Join NASA's Artemis Accords for 'Peaceful Exploration of Deep Space'](#) (*Space.com*)

Bangladesh has joined the Artemis Accords, becoming the 54th nation to endorse the U.S.-led framework for peaceful space exploration. The signing ceremony in Dhaka included Bangladeshi and U.S. officials, with NASA Acting Administrator Janet Petro emphasizing the country's role in shaping future space cooperation. The Artemis Accords, launched in 2020, promote transparency, sustainability and international collaboration in lunar and deep space activities.

*Check out below for comment opportunities, requests for proposals, notices of proposed rulemaking and a look at the week ahead in space events:*

### Comment Opportunities (RFIs)

[Extraordinary Contractual Action Requests](#)

Department of Defense; National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: June 10, 2025

### Change Order Accounting and Notification of Changes

Department of Defense; National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: June 10, 2025

### Long Haul Data Transport

Department of Defense

Close Date: May 19, 2025

## Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

### Lunar Assay via Small Satellite Orbiter (LASSO)

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

Close Date: May 27, 2025

## Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)

No new proposed rules.

## Upcoming Space Events

### Assured PNT Summit

Defense Strategies Institute

April 23-24, 2025

### China Space Conference

China Space Foundation

April 23-26, 2025

### Space Technology Conference - Central Eurasia

Azercosmos

April 24-25, 2025

### Discussion on Counterspace Trends

CSIS

April 25, 2025

### Open Commission Meeting

FCC

April 28, 2025

Science Advisory Board Meeting

NOAA

April 29, 2025

Military SSA Conference

SAE Media Group

April 28-30, 2025

Mars Exploration Program Analysis Group

NASA

April 30-May 1, 2025

Symposium on Small Satellites for Earth System Observation

IAA

May 4-8, 2025

Planetary Defense Conference

IAA

May 5-9, 2025

GEO Global Forum

Group on Earth Observations

May 5-9, 2025

Legal Subcommittee Session

COPUOS

May 5-16, 2025

Global Space Exploration Conference

IAF

May 7-9, 2025

SATExpo Middle East

Dubai World Trade Centre

May 13-15, 2025

GEOINT Symposium

USGIF

May 18-21, 2025

Luxembourg Space Resources Week

ESRIC, ESA, LSA, LIST

May 19-21, 2025

SpaceOps  
CASI, CSA  
May 26-30, 2025

International Space Development Conference  
National Space Society  
June 19-22, 2025

68th COPOUS Session  
United Nations  
June 25-July 4, 2025

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## Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

## Authors



Michael Mineiro  
Senior Counsel  
Washington, D.C.



Thomas McCarthy  
Partner  
Washington, D.C.



Carlos Bermudez  
Partner  
Los Angeles



Jennifer Richter  
Partner  
Washington, D.C.



Hans Rickhoff  
Partner  
Washington, D.C.



Steven Rowings  
Partner  
Washington, D.C.



Marta Thompson  
Senior Counsel  
Washington, D.C.



Lamar Smith  
Senior Consultant and  
Former Member of  
Congress  
Washington, D.C.

## Contributors



Chase Hamilton  
Associate  
Washington, D.C.



Sharanya Sriram  
Associate  
Washington, D.C.



Brandon Brodwater  
Public Law & Policy  
Fellow  
Washington, D.C.





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