

Akin™

Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update



December 06, 2024

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Good Afternoon!

We did not publish last week because of the holiday, but the space business certainly didn't succumb to a turkey-fueled nap. President-elect Trump named his pick to head NASA and the new EU space commissioner outlined his priorities, all while other European officials pondered what transatlantic space cooperation will look like under the incoming Trump administration.

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

P.S. Akin's DC office is hosting the 19th Annual Galloway Space Law Symposium on Friday, December 13. While in-person registration has sold out, you can still attend virtually and view the live stream ([register here](#)).

Akin Spotlight

Introducing Akin's [Policy Pulse](#), a comprehensive hub and bi-weekly newsletter, thoughtfully crafted by members of our bipartisan lobbying & public policy, regulatory and litigation practices to serve as your go-to resource for essential insights, in-depth analyses and practical political tools following the 2024 U.S. Elections.

[Subscribe here](#) to receive bi-weekly *Policy Pulse* updates on the potential agenda for the 119th Congress and the incoming administration.

On The Hill

Articles and Quotes

The House and Senate remain in session until December 20.

Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

On Monday, November 18, the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology **reported** the NASA SPREES Act (**H.R. 7687**) which aims to allow National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to receive and merge funds for the awarding of grants or cooperative agreements through collaborative scientific or engineering research or education projects with other agencies. The House Committee on Appropriations was granted an extension to December 19 for further consideration of the bill.

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

Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(Nov 6 - Nov 20, 2024)

The House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence and Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security will hold a **joint hearing** on Tuesday, December 10 at 2:00 p.m. titled “Safeguarding the Homeland from Unmanned Aerial Systems.”

In the White House/Executive Branch



Articles and Quotes

Trump Selects Jared Isaacman to Lead NASA (*The Hill*)

On Wednesday, December 4, President-elect Donald Trump announced his nomination of Jared Isaacman, a tech-entrepreneur, CEO of jet fighter company Draken International and private astronaut, to lead NASA in the upcoming administration. Isaacman is also the founder and CEO of Shift4, a payment processing company, leadership Trump cited as qualification to lead the space agency in his **announcement** on social media platform Truth Social. Trump noted Isaacman’s “dedication to pushing the boundaries of exploration, unlocking the mysteries of the universe, and advancing the new Space economy” in his statement. Isaacman is an astronaut, having participated in the first-ever private spacewalk led by SpaceX earlier this year and a SpaceX private human spaceflight mission in 2021. If confirmed by the Senate, he will replace Bill Nelson, the current NASA administrator.

FAA Moves Forward with Committee to Review Launch Licensing Regulations (*SpaceNews*)

On November 14, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced the formal establishment of SpARC, an aerospace rulemaking committee that will examine the agency’s Part 450 rule for launch and reentry licenses. Originally announced in February, FAA associate administrator Kevin Coleman stated that the committee to “foster more clarity, flexibility, efficiency and innovation” with the reevaluation of its licensing rule. The SpARC, which will include certain invited commercial stakeholders, is expected to report its recommendations in late summer 2025. Both industry and policy-makers have criticized the current Part 450 licensing process as slow, confusing and damaging to innovation.

Space Firms See Government Contracting Shakeup in Second Trump Term (*SpaceNews*)

Speaking at the Baird Defense & Government Conference on November 21, executives from the space and defense industries asserted that the incoming Trump administration’s close ties to Elon Musk and other prominent figures in the tech space could drastically alter

traditional Defense Department (DoD) procurement practices, potentially to the benefit of tech-focused industry newcomers. The potential changes include a shift away from the "cost plus" model to a more competitive, tech-driven approach, as well as a disruption of traditional "legacy" programs. The speakers cited the incoming administrations relationships with tech industry figures Palantir co-founder Peter Thiel and Anduril co-founder Palmer Luckey as reasons to expect a procurement makeover.

Artemis and the New Administration (Space Policy Online)

The incoming Trump administration brings with it new uncertainties for the future of various NASA programs, especially Artemis, according to industry experts. Former NASA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) officials from both parties spoke at the Beyond Earth Symposium between November 12-23 and agreed that Artemis elements like the Space Launch System (SLS), Orion crew capsule and Gateway lunar space station will be in jeopardy come January. The NASA of the new administration will also have to contend with Elon Musk's accelerated Martian ambitions, which are well ahead of agency projections.

US Agency Approves T-Mobile, SpaceX License to Extend Coverage to Dead Zones (Reuters)

On November 26, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced it has approved a license for T-Mobile and SpaceX Starlink's unit to provide supplemental internet coverage to remote areas. The partnership, announced in 2022 and aimed at eliminating "dead zones" and generally expanding the reach of wireless networks, is the first of its kind to be authorized to provide supplemental telecommunications coverage on terrestrial service flexible-use spectrum bands. FCC chair Jessica Rosenworcel stated that the FCC is "actively promoting competition in the space economy" by supporting collaborative ventures of this kind. Several other companies with similar ventures have applications pending approval by the FCC.

New Pentagon Report on UFOs Includes Hundreds of New Incidents but No Evidence of Aliens (Associated Press)

A report recently released by the Pentagon details hundreds of new DoD reports of unidentified and unexplained aerial phenomena (UAP) with no evidence of extraterrestrial origin. The report's authors asserted that while these instances remain unexplained, it is typically a result of lack of evidence necessary to draw sound conclusions. The report came days after a House Oversight hearing meant to address the relative uptick in UAP reports and policy interest.

US Air Force Awards Varda \$48 Million to Test Payloads on Reentry Capsules (SpaceNews)

On November 26, the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) granted Varda Space Industries a \$48 million contract to test payloads on the company's reentry capsules at hypersonic speeds. Varda Space, an in-space manufacturing startup, has developed a "factory-in-orbit" spacecraft that produces materials in zero gravity that are returned using a capsule protected by NASA-developed thermal shielding technology. The contract marks a growing interest in commercial reentry vehicles for military hypersonic testing and other applications, a strategy that is more cost-effective than traditional, expensive hypersonic test flights.

Federal Agency Space News

Federal Aviation Administration

New Record for FAA-Licensed Commercial Space Operations, Aerospace Rulemaking Committee Launched to Update Licensing Rule (November 14, 2024)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

[Towards Autonomous Surface Missions on Ocean Worlds](#) (December 3, 2024)

[NASA's Commercial Partners Make Progress on Low Earth Orbit Projects](#) (November 25, 2024)

[NASA Invites Media to Firefly Blue Ghost Mission 1 Launch to Moon](#) (November 25, 2024)

[NASA, SpaceX Illustrate Key Moments of Artemis Lunar Lander Mission](#) (November 20, 2024)

[NASA Plans to Assign Missions for Two Future Artemis Cargo Landers](#) (November 19, 2024)

[NASA Selects New Leader of Space Technology](#) (November 18, 2024)

U.S. Space Force

[USSF Accepting Proposals for Fourth Research Opportunity Under the USSF University Consortium](#) (November 21, 2024)

[DAF Announces Preferred, Final Location for Space Delta 15](#) (November 20, 2024)

[DAF Continues to Make Progress in Annual Audit](#) (November 20, 2024)

International

Articles & Quotes

[New EU Space Commissioner Outlines Priorities](#) (*SpaceNews*)

Andrius Kubilius, the new European Commissioner for Defence and Space, committed to bolstering European competitiveness in the space sector and the passage of space law at his November 6 confirmation hearing. Kubilius, the former prime minister of Lithuania, also cited several challenges faced by Europe's space competitiveness efforts: a "fragmented regulatory landscape," lack of funding and security risks. Other new key initiatives include enhancing the capabilities of flagship programs like Copernicus and Galileo, supporting the new IRIS² secure broadband constellation, and bolstering European autonomous access to space.

[Europe Weighs Impact of Trump Administration on Space Cooperation](#) (*SpaceNews*)

During the Space Tech Expo Europe conference between November 18-20, European space officials voiced concern that an isolationist agenda of the incoming Trump administration could weaken cooperation and diplomacy on civil and commercial space issues. Such concerns have led European officials to call for reduced reliance on the United States and moves to bolster the continent's own space capabilities. Greater spending on space, which may be intertwined with increases in European defense spending, would mark what some are predicting to be a shift towards European "space autonomy."

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)

Industry Supported Battery Passivation Techniques

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Dec 13, 2024

Johnson Space Center (JSC) Electronic Health Record (EHR)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Dec 13, 2024

Procurement Opportunity Document (POD) for Medium Explorer Concept Spacecraft and On-Orbit Support

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 6, 2025

Procurement Opportunity Document (POD) for Heliophysics Medium Explorer Spacecraft and/or Instrument Booms

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 6, 2025

Lease of Underutilized Building 49, Vibration and Acoustic Test Facility

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 16, 2025

Revised Draft Tiered Environmental Assessment for SpaceX Starship/Super Heavy Vehicle Increased Cadence at the Boca Chica Launch Site in Cameron County, Texas

Federal Aviation Administration

Close Date: Jan 17, 2025

Certain Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 15 Requirements

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 21, 2025

North Carolina Sales Tax Certification

Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 21, 2025

Subcontract Consent and Contractors' Purchasing System Review

Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 27, 2025

Certain Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 16 Contract Pricing Requirements

Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 28, 2025

Sensor Open Systems Architecture (SOSA) S3C & HPSC Turn-Key Product Development System

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 31, 2025

Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

Contract for Organizing Spaceflight Mission Operations and Systems (COSMOS) (80JSC024R0003)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Dec 13, 2024

ROSES 2024: F.12 Artemis IV Deployed Instruments Program

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Dec 17, 2024

Space Strategic Technology Institute (SSTI) IV - Advanced Remote Sensing

Department of Defense

Close Date: Jan 10, 2025

ROSES 2024: F.11 Payloads and Research Investigations on the Surface of the Moon: Stand-Alone Landing Site-Agnostic

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 15, 2025

ROSES 2024: A.22 NASA Energy and Water Cycle Study

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Feb 20, 2025

NASA Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) Rapid Response Research (R3)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Feb 26, 2025

ROSES 2024: A.62 FarmFlux Science Team

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Mar 7, 2025

ROSES 2024: A.63 Ecohydrology

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Mar 19, 2025

Directed Energy Technology Experimentation Research (DETER)

Department of Defense

Close Date: Aug 10, 2027

Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Inflation Adjustment of Acquisition-Related Thresholds

Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 28, 2025

Galaxy Forum China 2024

International Lunar Observatory Association
December 8-12, 2024

AGU Annual Meeting

American Geophysical Union
December 9-13, 2024

Luncheon with NASA's James Garvin

Maryland Space Business Roundtable
December 10, 2024

NewSpace ShowSpace Summit 2024

NewSpace Nexus
December 10, 2024

Spacepower Conference 2024

Space Force Association
December 10-12, 2024

Luncheon with Maj. Gen. Steven Whitney

Washington Space Business Roundtable
December 11, 2024

Galloway Space Law Symposium

International Institute of Space Law
December 13, 2024

DOD Commercial Satcom Workshop

SIA and U.S. Space Command
December 16-18, 2024

Celebrating the U.S. Space Force and Charting Its Future

Center for Strategic and International Studies
December 17, 2024

SciTech Forum

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
January 6-10, 2025

Commercial Space Week

SpaceCom
January 27-30, 2025

17th European Space Conference

Business Bridge Europe
January 28-29, 2025

Global Space Law Center Annual Symposium

Cleveland State University College of Law
February 13, 2025

Space Beach Law Lab

Space Beach

March 25-27, 2025



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Questions?

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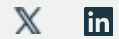


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