



Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

Good Afternoon!

If there was ever any doubt about the Trump administration's enthusiasm for space, it was swept aside by the August 20 release of the new National Space Transportation Policy. The wide-ranging plans lay out a roadmap for the policy and physical infrastructure to support a goal of 1,000 annual launches by 2030. On Capitol Hill, the U.S. Space Force shared a FY 2027 budget request that represents a 120% increase over its FY 2026 request. Outside the U.S., the EU levied sanctions on several leaders of Russia's space industry, Space Force launched its second satellite on a Japanese rocket and China's space program experienced another launch failure.

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

In the White House/Executive Branch

Articles and Quotes

Trump Announces a New Policy for a 'Golden Age of Space Transportation' (*New York Times*)

On August 20, the White House released a new **National Space Transportation Policy** aimed at expanding U.S. launch and re-entry capacity and enabling more than 1,000 rocket launches and spacecraft re-entries annually by 2030. The policy calls for developing additional launch and landing sites, streamlining regulations, increasing private investment and expanding the use of commercial space transportation services for civil and national security missions. It also directs efforts to integrate space traffic management with the national air traffic control system and develop capabilities to support launches within 48 hours for high-priority civil and national security missions. The policy further encourages greater commercial participation in lunar and Mars exploration and increased international use of U.S. space transportation capabilities. Implementation will depend on existing statutory authorities and funding provided by Congress.

Isaacman 'Extremely Confident' Artemis III Will Launch in 2027 (*Space Policy Online*)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Administrator Jared Isaacman said he is "extremely confident" Artemis III will launch in 2027 as NASA prepares for a redesigned mission focused on testing critical systems needed for a crewed lunar landing. Rather than landing astronauts on the Moon as previously planned, Artemis III will launch four astronauts aboard the

Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion spacecraft to conduct Earth-orbit rendezvous and docking operations with test versions of two Human Landing Systems (HLS), Blue Origin's Blue Moon MK2 and SpaceX's Starship HLS. NASA has begun stacking the Artemis III SLS and Orion hardware and is targeting a Wet Dress Rehearsal at Kennedy Space Center in November. The mission will test the integration of SLS, Orion and the two commercially developed lunar landers ahead of Artemis IV, which NASA is targeting for the first crewed lunar landing in 2028. Isaacman expressed confidence in the 2027 schedule despite ongoing development risks for both lander systems, including a May explosion involving Blue Origin's New Glenn launch vehicle and SpaceX's Starship Version 3 having not yet reached orbit. Congress has also provided additional support for Artemis, including \$10 billion in funding through the reconciliation legislation enacted last year.

Countdown Begins on US Plan to Strip Environmental Rules from Space Launches (International Comparative Legal Guides)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is seeking public comment on a **proposed rule** that could waive certain requirements under 13 federal statutes, primarily environmental laws, for commercial space launch, re-entry, experimental operations and spaceport licensing decisions. The proposal, intended to accelerate commercial space activity, could affect requirements under laws including the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act, while the FAA is also considering whether requirements under eight additional statutes should be eligible for waivers. The agency cites waiver authority established under the Commercial Space Launch Act of 1984, which permits exemptions when certain federal requirements are deemed unnecessary to protect public health and safety, property, national security or foreign policy interests. The proposal would not repeal the underlying statutes but could reduce their application to specified FAA licensing decisions. Public comments are due on August 31, after which the FAA will continue the rulemaking and interagency consultation process.

NASA's Canceled Lunar Space Station Tech Will Help Build the Artemis Moon Base (Space.com)

NASA plans to repurpose hardware and technology developed for the canceled Habitation and Logistics Outpost module of the Gateway lunar space station to support development of its planned Artemis lunar base. Electrical and mechanical components from the unfinished module will be adapted for a series of Lunar Infrastructure Demo missions focused on technologies needed for sustained human operations on the Moon, including systems capable of surviving the prolonged darkness and extreme conditions of the lunar south pole. The effort follows NASA's restructuring of the Artemis program earlier this year, which canceled Gateway as part of a shift toward a more incremental approach to developing lunar surface capabilities and accelerating the timeline for returning astronauts to the Moon.

Defense Department Expands R&D On Clearing Expired Satellites from Orbit (Breaking Defense)

The Department of War (DoW) is expanding research and development into technologies capable of capturing and safely deorbiting expired satellites, awarding \$8.4 million in initial contracts through the Defense Innovation Unit and Space Development Agency under the Deorbit-as-a-Service initiative. The effort aims to develop prototype spacecraft capable of providing deorbiting services beginning in 2028 as proliferated satellite constellations increase congestion,

collision risks and debris in low Earth orbit. The Pentagon will evaluate preliminary designs based on technical maturity, mission approach, schedule and affordability before selecting capabilities for on-orbit demonstrations. Beyond removing obsolete spacecraft, the technologies could support in-space transportation and logistics missions, including satellite inspection, repositioning, refueling and repair. Similar rendezvous and maneuvering capabilities also have potential counterspace applications, adding a national security dimension to the development of orbital servicing technologies.

FAA Names New Top Officials Amid Leadership Shakeup (Politico)

Recent reports suggest that the FAA has internally announced several leadership changes as Administrator Bryan Bedford works to fill senior positions across the agency. Pete Hearing, previously Bedford's chief of staff, will serve as interim Chief Administrative Officer, while Jeannie Shiffer has been named Chief of Staff after most recently serving as Acting Chief of Staff for the FAA's Air Traffic Organization. Chief Counsel Liam McKenna will serve as Acting Deputy Administrator following the departure of Chris Rocheleau, and Miles Bolin has joined the agency as Director of Industry Affairs. Bedford said the FAA currently has several officials serving in acting capacities and intends to work toward making permanent selections for those positions over the remainder of the fiscal year.

Federal Agency Space News

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASA, ESA Astronauts Wrap Up Station Spacewalk (August 18, 2026)

Starling Mission Opens New Frontiers in Space Navigation (August 17, 2026)

NASA Completes Astronaut-Deployed Science Instrument for Lunar Surface (August 11, 2026)

Building the Moon Base: NASA Stories at the Ion (August 11, 2026)

Office of Space Commerce

White House Releases Updated 'National Space Transportation Policy' (August 20, 2026)

OSC Releases SCC 'Call For Interest,' Launches Pilot Phase (August 20, 2026)

Call for Interest: U.S.-Africa Space Industry Roundtable, September 2026 (August 14, 2026)

OSC Joins India-U.S. Civil Space Joint Working Group, Advances Commercial Space Cooperation (August 12, 2026)

OSC to Hold TraCSS O/O Forum at 2026 Small Satellite Conference (August 10, 2026)

U.S. Department of War

[DIU Develops Program to Supercharge Defense Industrial Base](#) (August 18, 2026)

[Centcom Launches First-Ever Multinational Attack Drone Task Force](#) (August 14, 2026)

[DoW Launches the ‘Golden Dome for America Hub’ To Accelerate Industry Engagement, Revolutionize Homeland Missile Defense Partnerships](#) (August 11, 2026)

U.S. Space Force

[U.S. Space Force and Japan Successfully Launch U.S. Sovereign Space Domain Awareness Payload Aboard QZS-7 Satellite](#) (August 14, 2026)

[Space Forces in Europe - Space Forces Africa Changes Command](#) (August 13, 2026)

[Space Force Invests in Resilient Multi-Vendor Architecture to Build Next-Gen Space Data Network](#) (August 13, 2026)

On the Hill

Articles and Quotes

[Deep Dive: FY27 Defense Space Budget](#) (*Payload Space*)

The Space Force’s fiscal year (FY) 2027 budget request would increase funding to a record \$71.3 billion, a 120% increase over FY 2026 and the largest percentage increase proposed for any military service in decades. The request includes \$59.2 billion in annual appropriations and \$12.1 billion through the White House’s proposed defense reconciliation package, with FY 2028 planning documents projecting \$69.6 billion without reconciliation funding, indicating that much of the increase could transition into the service’s recurring base budget. The proposed growth is concentrated in a small number of priorities, with classified programs accounting for roughly 30% of the increase and space-based air moving target indication, command and control, and missile warning representing more than 45% of the remaining unclassified growth. Space-based air moving target indication would become the largest unclassified Space Force program at \$7.9 billion, while significant funding would also support the Space Data Network and broader space superiority capabilities. Unlike FY 2026, none of the Space Force’s \$71.3 billion request is formally categorized as Golden Dome funding, although several programs previously associated with the missile defense initiative have been recategorized under Space Superiority. Golden Dome separately requests approximately \$4.5 billion for space capabilities in FY 2027. The proposed increase remains dependent on congressional action on both annual appropriations and reconciliation.

[Guetlein: Golden Dome in Jeopardy Due to 2027 Funding Uncertainty](#) (*DefenseScoop*)

Golden Dome Director Gen. Michael Guetlein warned that development of the Pentagon’s missile defense architecture could face significant delays if Congress does not resolve uncertainty surrounding FY 2027 funding. The Pentagon is seeking \$17.5 billion for Golden Dome in FY 2027, with approximately 97% expected to come through a proposed \$350 billion reconciliation package

rather than regular appropriations. Because the program has relied primarily on reconciliation funding, including \$25 billion provided in 2025, it lacks a traditional FY 2026 appropriations baseline that could sustain development under a continuing resolution. Guetlein said 90% of FY 2026 funding has already been obligated and 95% committed to contracts supporting major elements of the architecture, including space-based interceptors and communications networks. He also reported two successful tests at White Sands Missile Range and said construction is underway for the first operational site as the Pentagon works toward delivering initial capabilities by summer 2028. DoW currently estimates Golden Dome will cost approximately \$185 billion, although some outside estimates have projected substantially higher long-term costs.

Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

No new legislation noticed.

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

Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(August 10, 2026 - August 28, 2026)

No new committee hearings or meetings.

International

Articles & Quotes

New EU Sanctions Target Leaders of Russia's Space Industry (*SpaceNews*)

The European Union (EU) expanded sanctions targeting Russia's military space sector, adding five Russian defense industry executives to its sanctions list, including officials connected to the development of military satellite, navigation and launch capabilities. The August 7 designations include the head of a Roscosmos subsidiary developing the Kasatka-R synthetic aperture radar satellite system, which supports radar-based Earth observation capabilities relevant to military reconnaissance and targeting, as well as an executive associated with the production of satellite navigation receivers for Russia's GLONASS system. The EU said space and satellite technologies are becoming increasingly relevant to its sanctions strategy because of their use in reconnaissance, targeting and military communications supporting Russian operations in Ukraine. The individual sanctions build on previous restrictions against Russian space and defense organizations and include asset freezes, prohibitions on providing funds or economic resources and EU travel restrictions.

U.S. Space Force Payload Lifts Off on Japanese Satellite (*Air & Space Forces Magazine*)

A U.S. Space Force space domain awareness payload launched aboard Japan's QZS-7 navigation satellite on August 10, completing a bilateral hosted payload program designed to strengthen U.S. and Japanese space capabilities. Launched aboard an H3 rocket from Japan's Tanegashima Space Center, QZS-7 will augment global positioning system coverage in the Pacific while its U.S. payload provides near-real-time data on objects in geosynchronous orbit above the region. The payload is the second Space Force sensor hosted on Japan's Quasi-Zenith Satellite System and will be operated by Mission Delta 2 as part of the U.S. Space Surveillance Network, supporting efforts to detect, track, and maintain custody of objects in deep space. The program stems from a [2020 memorandum of understanding](#) between the Space Force and Japan's Office of National Space Policy and is intended to improve space domain awareness, interoperability and resilience.

Chinese LM-7A Rocket Fails (Space Policy Online)

China's Long March (LM) 7A rocket failed shortly after liftoff from the Wenchang Satellite Launch Center on August 10 while carrying the China Sat-4B communications satellite. The rocket reportedly suffered an apparent structural failure approximately 90 seconds after launch near the point of maximum dynamic pressure, although the cause remains under investigation. The failure marks the first for the LM-7A since its inaugural flight in 2020, following more than a dozen successful missions. The rocket is primarily used to place satellites, including military spacecraft, into geostationary transfer orbit. It remains unclear whether the incident will affect China's upcoming Chang'e-7 lunar mission, which uses a different launch vehicle but shares some engine technology with the LM-7A.

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)

Waiver of Specified Statutory Requirements for Commercial Space Launch and Reentry Actions

Federal Aviation Administration

Close Date: August 31, 2026

Operational Test and Training Readiness Division - DevSecOps

Department of War (Air Force)

Close Date: September 4, 2026

Space Force Mission Delta 9 (MD9) - SL-5 EC2-S Ground System Sustainment

Department of War (Air Force)

Close Date: September 11, 2026

Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (NBL) Facility Commercial Utilization

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: September 30, 2026

System Delta 84 (SYD 84/MT) Medium Earth Orbit Missile Warning / Missile Tracking Epoch 3 and Epoch 4

Department of War (Air Force)

Close Date: October 31, 2026

Private Sector Participation in Domestic and International Events on Spaceflight Safety, Responsible Practices and Commercial Space

Department of State

Close Date: December 31, 2026

Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

RF Architectures Applying Photonic Timing and Routing (RAAPTR)

Department of War (DARPA)

Close Date: August 24, 2026

FMS Requirement to Procure Ultra High Frequency Tactical Satellite (TACSAT) Radios for NCIA

Department of War (Army)

Close Date: August 28, 2026

Landsat 10 Spacecraft

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: August 31, 2026

Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition (CSDA) Program Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) On-Ramp 2

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: September 5, 2026

Geostationary Littoral Imaging and Monitoring Radiometer (GLIMR) Access to Space (ATS) 'GLIMR ATS'

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: September 11, 2026

Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)

No new proposed rules.

Upcoming Space Events

Global Summit on Space Sciences and Aerospace Engineering

Space Science Research

August 26-27, 2026

2026 Intelligence and National Security Summit

AFCEA/INSA

August 26-27, 2026

3rd Conference on AI for Space

IAA

August 26-28, 2026

Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel (ASAP)

NASA

August 31, 2026

Space Weather Roundtable

SSB - National Academies

September 1-2, 2026

Space Policy Forum: Bringing Space to the National Debate

Aerospace Corporation - CSPS

September 2, 2026

Outer Space Security Conference 2026

UNIDIR

September 8-9, 2026

2026 Space Elevator Conference

ISEC

September 12-13, 2026

2026 Air, Space & Cyber Conference

AFA

September 14-16, 2026

Glenn Space Technology Symposium

American Astronautical Society

September 15-16, 2026

2026 World Space Business Week

Novaspace

September 14-17, 2026

2026 Texas Space Summit

Texas Space Summit

September 21-23, 2026

Aerospace Innovation Forum: A Golden Age of Aerospace and Defense

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

September 23, 2026

Off World Summit

Payload Space

September 23-24, 2026

World Space Week

WSW

October 4-10, 2026

SATExpo 2026 - Dubai

SATExpo

October 5-7, 2026

2026 International Astronautical Congress

IAC

October 5-7, 2026

Learn more about our Space Law and Policy practice.

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Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

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