



Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

Good Afternoon!

Washington's demand for space capabilities is headed for the moon: Senate appropriators continue to push back against proposed NASA budget cuts, U.S. Space Force is urging industry to expand satellite production and investment and has selected 14 vendors to compete under a 10 year, \$1.8 billion program to advance next-gen space domain awareness, and the Golden Dome continues to grow in scope and cost.

Outside the U.S., European lawmakers remain divided over how to regulate non-EU space companies under the proposed EU Space Act, and Russia and India appear to be getting serious about space cooperation.

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

On The Hill

Articles and Quotes

[Key Senate Appropriator Rejects Proposed NASA Budget Cuts](#) (SpaceNews)

Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS), said he opposes the Trump administration's proposed cuts to the fiscal year (FY) 2027 National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) budget and will work to fund the agency at levels similar to prior years. Speaking at an April 12 space policy roundtable ahead of the 41st Space Symposium, Sen. Moran emphasized the need for a balanced budget across exploration, science, aeronautics and workforce priorities and signaled that the CJS Subcommittee will seek to reverse the proposed 23% reduction to approximately \$18.8 billion. He indicated a goal of maintaining funding closer to the roughly \$24.4 billion enacted for FY 2026 and cautioned against prioritizing exploration at the expense of other mission areas. Sen. Moran also noted that the appropriations process is pending additional budget details and that a future hearing with NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman is planned. He added that while he supports efforts to accelerate Artemis missions, questions remain regarding the costs of new initiatives, including a lunar base and nuclear propulsion, as Congress evaluates funding levels moving

forward.

Rogers Eyes \$1.15T NDAA Topline As Trump Pushes Reconciliation for Defense Hike *(Politico)*

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said he plans to draft the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) using a \$1.15 trillion topline for the base defense budget, aligning with the Trump-Vance administration's proposal to fund the remainder of its \$1.5 trillion defense request through the budget reconciliation process. Chair Rogers indicated that structuring the NDAA at the lower topline could make the bill more acceptable to Democrats, while additional defense funding would depend on separate reconciliation legislation. Lawmakers noted that this approach mirrors the previous year's strategy of pairing a lower base NDAA with supplemental funding through reconciliation. House Armed Services Committee leadership from both parties are expected to meet with Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth to review further details of the administration's budget proposal as Congress begins work on the FY 2027 defense authorization bill.

White House Seeks \$17.5 Billion for Golden Dome, but Most Funding Hinges on Reconciliation *(Federal News Network)*

The Trump administration is seeking \$17.5 billion in FY 2027 funding for the Golden Dome missile defense initiative, with most of that funding dependent on congressional approval of a separate budget reconciliation bill. The proposal includes approximately \$400 million in the base request, with the remaining \$17.1 billion tied to reconciliation as part of a broader \$1.5 trillion defense budget strategy that splits funding between the appropriations process and party-line legislation. This approach follows a \$23 billion down payment provided through a prior reconciliation measure and reflects a continued effort by the White House to use reconciliation to advance defense priorities without relying on bipartisan appropriations agreements. However, it remains unclear whether congressional Republicans will unify behind this strategy, particularly given the scale of the funding request and past concerns surrounding large reconciliation packages, leaving the future of Golden Dome funding dependent on Congressional negotiations.

Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

Rep. Keith Self (R-TX) **introduced** a bill to amend title 51, United States Code, to direct the Administrator of the NASA to seek to establish the initial elements of a lunar outpost (**H.R. 8187**).

Rep. Vince Fong (R-CA) **introduced** the Optimizing United States Technology to Preempt Adversarial Communist Expansion (OUTPACE) in Space Act (**H.R. 8198**), which aims to advance American space competitiveness by ensuring safe and efficient integration of commercial space and hypersonic operations into the national airspace system.

Please find our Space Legislation Tracker **here**.

Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(April 6, 2026 - April 24, 2026)

On April 14, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation (CST) held a **business meeting** to consider legislation and nominations.

On April 14, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) held a **closed briefing** on intelligence matters.

On April 15, SSCI held a **closed briefing** on intelligence matters.

On April 15, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) held a member day **hearing**.

On April 15, the HASC Strategic Forces Subcommittee held a **hearing** on FY27 Missile Defense & Missile Defeat Programs and Activities.

On April 15, the HASC Readiness Subcommittee held a **hearing** on Military Readiness for FY27.

On April 15, the House Science, Space and Technology (SST) Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight held a **hearing** on the state of scientific publishing.

On April 16, the HASC Intelligence and Special Operations Subcommittee held a **hearing** on the Defense Intelligence Enterprise.

On April 16, the HASC Cyber, Information Technologies and Innovation Subcommittee held a **hearing** on the Cyber Posture of the Department of Defense.

On April 16, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) held a closed **hearing** on the FY 2027 Budget Request for the National Reconnaissance Office, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and the United States Space Force.

On April 17, the HASC Cyber, Information Technologies and Innovation Subcommittee held a **hearing** on the Science, Technology and Innovation posture of the Department of Defense.

On April 20, the Senate Armed Services (SASC) Subcommittee on Strategic Forces held a **hearing** on the Department of Energy's atomic energy defense activities and DoD nuclear weapons programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program.

On April 20, HPSCI will hold a closed **hearing** on the FY 2027 Budget Request for Compartmented Programs.

On April 21, SASC will hold a **hearing** on maritime unmanned surface vessels.

On April 21, the HASC Cyber, Information Technologies and Innovation Subcommittee will hold a **hearing** on the Cyber Posture of the Department of Defense.

On April 21, the House Energy and Commerce (E&C) Subcommittee on Communications and Technology will hold a **hearing** on the Satellite and Telecommunications (SAT) Streamlining Act (**S. 3639**).

On April 22, the HPSCI Defense Intelligence and Overhead Architecture Subcommittee will hold a closed **hearing** on the FY 2027 Budget Request for Military Services.

On April 22, the HPSCI Defense Intelligence and Overhead Architecture Subcommittee will hold a closed **hearing** on the FY 2027 Budget Request for the Defense Intelligence Agency, United States Cyber Command and United States Special Operations Command.

On April 22, the HASC Subcommittee on Strategic Forces will hold a **hearing** on the FY 2027 Budget Request for Nuclear Forces and Atomic Energy Defense Activities.

On April 23, the House Appropriations (HAC) Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies will hold a budget **hearing** on the Department of Commerce.

In the White House/Executive Branch

Articles and Quotes

NASA Cheers First Successful Moon Mission Since 1972 (*Space Policy Online*)

The successful completion of the Artemis II mission marked the first crewed lunar mission since 1972, as astronauts returned safely to Earth on April 10 following a nine-day free-return trajectory around the Moon. NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman declared the mission a success after splashdown, noting it demonstrated the United States' ability to send astronauts to the Moon and return them safely. The crew traveled more than 694,000 miles and reached a record distance from Earth, surpassing Apollo-era missions, and included the first woman, first person of color and first non-American to travel to the Moon. Officials said the mission validated key systems for future lunar exploration, despite technical issues identified during flight, including a heat shield concern from prior testing, a wastewater system issue and a helium leak in the service module. NASA indicated that further analysis and redesign efforts will be required ahead of future missions, while continuing plans to increase the cadence of Artemis flights.

White House Releases Space Nuclear Policy (*SpaceNews*)

On April 14, the White House released a new **space nuclear policy memorandum** directing NASA, Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Energy to accelerate the development of nuclear power and propulsion systems for space, with initial demonstrations targeted as early as 2028. Announced by Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)

Michael Kratsios at the 41st Space Symposium as part of the implementation of a December executive order on space policy, the policy establishes a roadmap for deploying nuclear reactors in orbit and on the lunar surface to support long-duration missions, including future human exploration of the moon and Mars. The directive calls for coordinated interagency efforts, including design competitions, development of low- to mid-power reactors and planning for higher-power systems in the 2030s, alongside assessments of potential military applications and the readiness of the nuclear industrial base. Officials said the policy aims to move space nuclear technologies beyond research and into operational use, supporting sustained space operations and broader national space objectives.

Space Force Urges Industry to Invest in Satellite Production Capacity (*Air & Space Forces Magazine*)

The U.S. Space Force (USSF) is urging industry to expand satellite production capacity ahead of a projected increase in procurement funding, as part of its FY 2027 budget request, which includes \$19 billion for procurement within a proposed \$71 billion topline. Speaking at the 41st Space Symposium, Lt. Gen. Philip Garrant said the service expects to scale production significantly and is encouraging companies to invest in facilities and workforce now in anticipation of future contracts. Officials indicated that the service plans to leverage both new and existing contracts to accelerate production once appropriations are finalized, while also expanding its civilian workforce and restructuring its acquisition enterprise into portfolio-based systems to improve speed and flexibility.

Iran War Spotlights Military Challenges Posed by Space-Based Remote Sensing (*Breaking Defense*)

Gen. Chance Saltzman, USSF Chief of Space Operations, said the growing availability of commercial satellite imagery is reshaping military operations by making it increasingly difficult to conceal activities, requiring the military to adapt to a more transparent operational environment. During the ongoing conflict involving Iran, some U.S.-based commercial imagery providers have voluntarily limited access to or delayed the release of imagery over sensitive areas, including implementing time delays on imagery distribution, citing concerns about operational security and the potential misuse of data by adversaries. At the same time, other providers, including foreign firms, have continued to release imagery of military activity in the region, underscoring the limited ability of the U.S. government to control the dissemination of commercially available space-based data. Officials noted that while commercial imagery can support intelligence sharing, deterrence and information operations, it also creates challenges for military planning, particularly as adversaries can access similar data. Gen. Saltzman indicated that these dynamics should be incorporated into military planning and wargaming as part of adapting to the evolving space-enabled battlefield.

Space Force Brings 14 Vendors Into \$1.8B Next-Gen Space Domain Awareness Program (*DefenseScoop*)

USSF selected 14 vendors to compete under a 10-year, \$1.8 billion contract vehicle known as Andromeda, aimed at advancing next-generation space domain awareness capabilities. The program is designed to improve the service's ability to track, identify, and analyze objects in orbit, with the first task order supporting the RG-XX satellite constellation, which is slated to

replace the current Geosynchronous Space Situational Awareness Program (GSSAP). Officials said the effort reflects a shift toward more flexible acquisition approaches, allowing the service to procure capabilities from multiple providers and incorporate commercial technologies. The RG-XX constellation is also expected to include enhanced maneuverability and on-orbit refueling capabilities, supporting more dynamic operations in geosynchronous orbit as USSF modernizes its space surveillance architecture.

Federal Agency Space News

Federal Aviation Administration

[FCC Poised to Empower Super-Fast, Space-Based Broadband](#) (April 8, 2026)

[FCC Announces Tentative Agenda for April Open Meeting](#) (April 9, 2026)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

[Canadarm2 Installs Cygnus XL Cargo Craft to Unity Module](#) (April 13, 2026)

[Nutrition Research Arrives Aboard Space Station](#) (April 14, 2026)

[Crew Begins New Space Research and Installs New Science Gear](#) (April 15, 2026)

[NASA Selects Voyager for Seventh Private Mission to Space Station](#) (April 15, 2026)

[Update: Artemis II Crew Comes Home](#) (April 15, 2026)

[NASA CubeSat Begins Mission to Study Radio Waves in Space](#) (April 16, 2026)

National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service

[NOAA's Wildfire Detection System a "Game Changer" for Nebraska's Record-Breaking Morrill Fire](#) (April 9, 2026)

U.S Department of Defense

[Navy Researchers Seek Volunteers for NASA Study](#) (April 9, 2026)

U.S. Space Force

[Buckley SFB, Malmstrom AFB Selected for Advanced Nuclear Power for Installations Program](#) (April 8, 2026)

[DAF Takes Steps for Potential Alaskan AI Data Centers](#) (April 10, 2026)

[STARCOM Hiring Surge Aims To Fill More Than 400 Civilian Positions](#) (April 13, 2026)

International

Articles & Quotes

EU Lawmakers Split Over How Hard To Be on US Space Firms in New Law *(Politico)*

Lawmakers in the European Parliament are divided over provisions in the proposed European Union (EU) Space Act regarding how to regulate non-EU space companies. Amendments show disagreement on whether to allow third-country operators to access the EU market through an “equivalence regime,” which would recognize compliance with similar rules abroad, or to require full compliance with EU regulations. Some lawmakers proposed maintaining equivalence with conditions such as reciprocal market access, while others proposed removing the mechanism and applying full regulatory checks to all non-EU providers. The legislation, introduced by the European Commission, would expand oversight of satellite operators, including requirements related to space debris and environmental impacts. Negotiations are ongoing, with a committee vote expected in July.

India Wants To Ally With Russia for Building Own Space Station: Senior ISRO Official in Moscow *(The Times of India)*

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said it is seeking to partner with Russia on the development of India’s planned Bharatiya Antariksh Space Station (BAS), targeted for completion by 2035, according to a senior official speaking at a space forum in Moscow. Asir Packiaraj, director of the ISRO Propulsion Complex, stated that India is looking to collaborate with Russian counterparts on key subsystems, including control, power, communications and tracking, drawing on Russia’s experience with space stations such as Mir and its segment of the International Space Station (ISS). The discussions come as both countries advance plans for their own future space stations amid the expected retirement of the ISS around 2030-2031. Officials also noted that Russia could support astronaut training and provide technical expertise for long-duration missions, while India continues to explore additional international partnerships for its station program.

US and UK Train To Take On Russian Nuclear Space Weapons *(The Telegraph)*

Gen. Stephen Whiting, Commander of United States Space Command (SPACECOM), said the U.S. and its allies, including the United Kingdom, are increasing efforts to prepare for potential Russian nuclear anti-satellite threats through joint wargaming exercises focused on space conflict scenarios. Speaking at the Space Symposium, Whiting emphasized the need for new strategies, including maneuver warfare in space, to deter and respond to threats from near-peer adversaries. Officials warned that space has become central to modern society and that disruptions to satellites could have widespread impacts across sectors such as communications, navigation and critical infrastructure. The exercises come amid ongoing concerns about Russian counterspace capabilities, including a previously identified system assessed by U.S. officials as capable of targeting satellites in low Earth orbit, while Russia has denied such claims.

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)

Lunar Science and Technology Payloads for Expanded Lunar Landing Opportunities

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: April 23, 2026

Enabling Commercial Lunar Transportation to Support a Sustained Lunar Base

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: April 23, 2026

Advancement of “Science as a Service” for NASA and Commercial Partners

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: April 23, 2026

Capability Demonstrations & Supply Chain Challenges for NASA Moon Base Development

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: April 23, 2026

Mission Integration Prime for Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) Series Satellites

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: May 4, 2026

STARBASE

Department of Defense

Close Date: May 5, 2026

RFI and Industry Day for NASA ARMD Aeronautics Flight Accelerator

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: May 7, 2026

RFI for Unmanned Surface Vessels (USVs)

Department of Defense

Close Date: May 8, 2026

Spaceport and Launch Assessment Study

Department of Defense

Close Date: May 15, 2026

RFI - Environmental Satellite Ground Station

Department of Defense

Close Date: June 1, 2026

Competition in the Communications Marketplace

Federal Communications Commission

Close Date: June 22, 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)

Commercial and Military Satellite Communications Operations Support (COSMOS)

Department of Defense

Close Date: May 1, 2026

Near Earth Orbit Network Program's Sounder for Microwave-Based Applications

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: June 1, 2026

Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)

No new proposed rules.

Upcoming Space Events

Schriever Spacepower Series Webinar

The Mitchell Institute

April 21, 2026

MEPAG Hybrid Meeting #43

MEPAG

April 21-23, 2026

April Luncheon Featuring Dr. Nicola Fox, Associate Administrator, Science Mission Directorate, NASA

WSBR

April 22, 2026

Direct-to-Device & Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN) Commercialisation: Scaling Satellite Services in 2026 and Beyond

GSOA

April 23, 2026

2026 Space Weather Workshop

NOAA

April 27-May 1, 2026

2026 Spring Meeting

LSIC

April 28-30, 2026

NASA ISS Advisory Committee

NASA

April 29, 2026

GEOINT 2026

USGIF

May 3-6, 2026

2026 Global Space Technology Convention & Exhibition

GSTCE

May 13-14, 2026

AbSciCon 2026

AbSciCon

May 17-22, 2026

2026 ASCEND

AIAA

May 19-21, 2026

SmallSat Europe 2026

SmallSat

May 26-28, 2026

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