



Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

Good Afternoon!

It's been a busy couple of weeks in space and space policy. President Trump proposed a \$6 billion cut to NASA's budget and a \$1 trillion defense budget, the nominee to lead NASA is moving to the full Senate for confirmation, and the FCC is considering licensing changes that would support GPS alternatives and changes to spectrum sharing rules for non-geostationary orbit (NGSO) satellite operators. Outside of Washington, China announced that it would lend lunar samples from the Chang'e-5 mission to U.S. and international universities, and the Hubble Telescope celebrated 35 years in space.

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

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

[Senate Commerce Committee Advances Isaacman Nomination to Lead NASA](#) (SpaceNews)

On April 30, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee (CST) advanced the nomination of Jared Isaacman to serve as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Administrator by a vote of 19 to 9. CST Chair Ted Cruz (R-TX) voiced his support of Isaacman, stating that they agree that Martian ambitions should not detract from sustained human lunar presence and the Artemis program. The vote, also supported by Ranking Member

Maria Cantwell (D-WA), now sends Isaacman's nomination to consideration by the full Senate as the final hurdle to confirmation.

Congress Eyes Nearly \$25B to Jump Start Golden Dome (*Air and Space Forces*)

On April 30, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) advanced a \$150 billion reconciliation package that includes the allotment of \$24.7 billion for Golden Dome, formerly the Iron Dome for America, in FY2025. The Dome, meant to serve as a full-spectrum missile defense platform for the U.S., would have \$5.6 billion in funding for space-based intercept capabilities, as well as \$7.2 billion for military space-based sensors, under the HASC package. As the FY2026 appropriations process is also underway in Congress, the Pentagon has yet to release its budget request.

Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

On April 29, the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee held a **markup** of the *ASTRO Act* (**H.R. 2984**), *ASCEND Act* (**H.R. 2600**), and the *Celestial Time Standardization Act* (**H.R. 2313**), all of which passed the Committee by voice vote.

Also on April 29, HASC held its **markup** of its Committee Print providing for reconciliation pursuant to the budget resolution. The Committee passed a substitute amendment by a vote of 35-21.

On April 30, Senate CST **advanced** the nominations of Jared Isaacman to be NASA Administrator and Olivia Trusty to be an FCC Member to the full senate. The Committee also passed the Senate version of the *ASCEND Act* (**S. 1437**) and the *Comprehensive NASA Reporting Act* (**S. 1081**).

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

Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(May 2, 2025 - May 16, 2025)

On Tuesday, May 6, the House Homeland Security Committee will hold a **hearing** titled "Beijing's Air, Space, and Maritime Surveillance from Cuba: A Growing Threat to the Homeland."

Also on May 6, the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee will hold an **oversight hearing** on both the Air and Space Forces.

In the White House/Executive Branch

Articles and Quotes

Trump Proposes \$6 Billion Cut to NASA (*Space Policy Online*)

On May 2, the White House released the President's FY 2026 Discretionary Budget Request, or the "skinny" budget, which calls for \$163 billion in cuts to non-defense spending. Included in the proposed cuts is a \$6 billion hit to NASA funding, spread across all programs except for human space exploration, which the request would slot to receive an extra \$1 billion investment for "Mars-focused programs." The largest targets of the request are space science at a \$2.3 billion cut, earth science at \$1.2 billion and mission support at \$1.1 billion. It would also eliminate the in-development Gateway lunar space station and phase out both the SLS and Orion programs. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has asserted that the cuts would refocus the agency towards Mars exploration and lunar competition with China while also saving dollars through reducing "lower priority research" and "unaffordable missions." As for NOAA, the document makes no specific mention of the Office of Space Commerce—though it does include a \$1.5 billion cut for operations, research, grants and satellite procurement at the agency.

Trump Proposes \$1 Trillion Defense Budget for 2026 (*Air and Space Forces*)

The White House has proposed a 13% boost to defense spending in FY 2026 as part of the skinny budget, pushing the Pentagon's budget past \$1 trillion for the first time ever. The budget highlights investments in missile defense, shipbuilding, munitions and countering China in the Indo-Pacific, while also aiming to strengthen homeland security and revitalize the defense industrial base. Assuming the detailed budget mirrors the proposed reconciliation package, the Navy stands to benefit most due to its longstanding push for increased shipbuilding, while the much smaller Space Force would likely see a significant percentage increase in funding.

FCC Opens New Battlefield in Satellite Power Struggle (*SpaceNews*)

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has voted to review its satellite spectrum sharing rules, launching a new rulemaking that could ease restrictions on non-geostationary (NGSO) satellite operators. The move targets Equivalent Power Flux Density (EPFD) limits, which NGSO companies argue hinder broadband expansion. Geostationary operators warn that changes could endanger key services and reduce industry competition. This regulatory shift follows growing momentum for NGSO systems and broader FCC efforts to modernize satellite policy.

Trump Praises Hubble, Promises America Will Lead the Way in Space Exploration (*Space Policy Online*)

On April 24, President Trump issued a statement commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Hubble Space Telescope's launch and reaffirming America's commitment to leadership in space exploration. The statement comes after the administration's proposed cancellation of the Nancy Grace Roman Telescope, the upcoming addition to the same telescope series as the Hubble and James Webb Telescopes. The statement further asserts that the administration is committed to the human exploration of Mars and collaboration with the private space sector, citing the reestablishment of the National Space Council from Trump's first term.

New Doc Spells Out How USSF Will Use Space Control to Gain Space Superiority (*Air and Space*)

Forces)

The Space Force has released a new doctrine, “Space Warfighting: A Framework for Planners,” which details the branch’s approach to achieving space superiority through space control operations. The framework outlines both offensive and defensive counterspace actions, including orbital pursuit, standoff strikes, electromagnetic and cyber-attacks, and protective escorts for friendly spacecraft. The doctrine further emphasizes the need for a joint military lexicon and normalizing space as a warfighting domain. While the Space Force does not yet have all the operational capabilities it lists, the document is meant to set forth a direction for future operations.

Changes In FCC Rules to Support GPS Alternatives Could Impact DOD (Breaking Defense)

The FCC is considering changes to spectrum licensing rules to support alternatives to GPS for positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) services, a move that aims to address vulnerabilities in GPS, such as susceptibility to jamming and spoofing, which have been increasingly exploited in global conflict zones like Syria, Ukraine and the Red Sea. While the FCC’s jurisdiction is limited to commercial spectrum uses, industry regulations can affect national security activities, especially in the context of band interference. Space Force Systems Command has noted that they are exploring PNT solutions in other frequencies, including S-band.

Federal Agency Space News

Department of Defense

Statement by Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs and Senior Advisor Sean Parnell on the First 100 Days at the Department of Defense (April 29, 2025)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Headquarters and Center Chief Counsel Contacts (April 24, 2025)

NASA, Boeing, Consider New Thin-Wing Aircraft Research Focus (April 24, 2025)

Dragon Docks to Station Delivering Science, Supplies to Crew (April 22, 2025)

NASA to Cover US Spacewalk 93, Hold Preview News Conference (April 18, 2025)

U.S. Space Force

Modernizing the IT Backbone: The Air Force’s Commitment to Critical Infrastructure (April 21, 2025)

International

Articles & Quotes

China to Lend Chang'e-5 Moon Samples to U.S. Universities (*SpaceNews*)

China has announced that it will allow two NASA-affiliated U.S. universities, Brown and Stony Brook, to borrow lunar samples collected from the Chang'e-5 mission, the result of an international application process. Several universities from Japan, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Pakistan have also been approved. While Chang'e-5's successor, Chang'e-6, has collected nearly 2,000 grams of lunar material from Apollo crater, international applications for use are not yet open.

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)

Remotely Administered Psychoacoustic Test for Advanced Air Mobility Noise Human Response

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: May 22, 2025

WB-57 Engine Replacement Feasibility Study

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: May 22, 2025

Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture Tranche 3 Tracking Layer (T3TRK)

Space Development Agency

Close Date: May 22, 2025

Astronaut Crew Rescue Services

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: May 23, 2025

Ballistic Missile Early Warning (BMEW) and Military Satellite Communication (MILSATCOM)

Request for Information (RFI)

Department of Defense

Close Date: May 27, 2025

Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (NBL) Facility Commercial Utilization

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: July 28, 2025

Contractor Financial Management Records

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: June 29, 2025

Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

Thermal Analysis Engineering Services

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: May 14, 2025

Joint Safety Health Institutional Facilities Team (JSHIFT)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: May 22, 2025

Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)

Modernizing Spectrum Sharing for Satellite Broadband: Revision of the Commission's Rules to Establish More Efficient Spectrum Sharing between NGSO and GSO Satellite Systems

Federal Communications Commission

Close Date: TBD

Upcoming Space Events

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

Schriever Spacepower Series with Brig. Gen. Kristin Panzenhagen

Mitchell Institute

May 6, 2025

Global Space Exploration Conference

IAF

May 7-9, 2025

Committee on Key Non-Polar Destinations Across the Moon

National Academies

May 7-9

Schriever Spacepower Series with Lt. Gen. Thomas James

Mitchell Institute

May 8, 2025

Public Meeting on SpaceX SLC-40 Launch Increase Proposal

FAA

May 8, 2025

2025 Global Security Forum

CSIS

May 13, 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

Spring Meeting

Lunar Surface Innovation Consortium

May 20-22, 2025

SpaceOps 2025

CASI, CSA

May 26-30, 2025

SmallSat Europe 2025

SmallSat Europe

May 27-28, 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?

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