



## Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

---

Good Afternoon!

*They say things come in threes, and the past couple of weeks in space news have been no exception: the FAA announced user fees for launch and reentry that will run \$30,000 per mission and increase annually through 2033. Germany kicked off a €35 billion military space program, and Russia made a three ton cargo delivery to the ISS last week.*

*All of this comes as Congress and the White House square off over the administration's NASA budget request, and China moves forward with plans for a 10,000 satellite "space ground network" as part of its broader satellite internet strategy.*

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

---

### On The Hill

#### Articles and Quotes

##### **Appropriators Reject NASA Budget Proposal** (*SpaceNews*)

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees from both parties criticized the Trump administration's fiscal year (FY) 2027 National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) budget request during recent hearings, with some signaling they may seek to reject the request and instead base funding on prior-year levels. Lawmakers raised concerns about the proposed \$18.8 billion topline, a 23% reduction, and highlighted potential impacts including the cancellation of more than 50 science missions and significant cuts to research areas.

Appropriators questioned NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman on the proposal, with several members including Rep. Hal Rogers (R-KY), Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY), Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS), Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) raising concerns. Isaacman argued that the budget proposal provided sufficient funding for NASA's exploration priorities while seeking efficiencies in areas like science. Congressional leaders indicated the appropriations process will move forward as they consider alternative funding levels, with House and Senate subcommittees preparing to draft spending legislation.

##### **Golden Dome Has 'Pathways To Pivot' if Delays Arise, General Says** (*Military Times*)

Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee questioned Gen. Michael Guetlein, the U.S.

Space Force (USSF) official overseeing the Golden Dome initiative, on the program's cost, feasibility and lack of detailed updates during recent testimony, as Congress continues oversight of the proposed \$185 billion missile defense system. Gen. Guetlein stated the program remains on track to deliver an initial capability by mid-2028 and emphasized that its modular architecture allows for adjustments if components face delays. Lawmakers, including Sen. Angus King (I-ME), raised concerns about the scope and practicality of the system and requested greater clarity on its design and implementation. Separately, Rep. Jeff Crank (R-CO), co-chair of the House Golden Dome Caucus, previously expressed frustration with delays in receiving a detailed framework from the White House and warned that missing the 2028 deadline could jeopardize the effort. Defense officials also noted that related missile defense efforts are continuing through development and testing phases as Congress evaluates the program's progress and funding.

---

## Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY) introduced the Satellite and Telecommunications (SAT) Streamlining Act ([H.R. 8255](#)), which would amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for radiofrequency licensing authority relating to certain operations.

Sen. Tim Sheehy (R-MT) introduced the Maverick Act ([S. 4161](#)), which would authorize the conveyance by the Secretary of the Navy to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center Commission in Huntsville, Alabama, of certain F-14D Tomcat aircraft. The bill **passed** the Senate with an amendment by unanimous consent. Rep. Abe Hamadeh (R-AZ) **introduced** companion legislation ([H.R. 8331](#)) in the House.

Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-FL) introduced the Artemis Accords Authorization Act ([H.R. 8321](#)), which aims to promote peaceful space exploration, expand participation in the Artemis Accords, establish norms for safe and sustainable space activities, and advance national security and economic competitiveness through leadership in space.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX) introduced the Bureau of Industry and Security License Administration Enhancement Act ([H.R. 8284](#)), which aims to enhance the administration of export control licenses under the Export Control Reform Act of 2018, including those related to aerospace and space technologies. The legislation was **reported favorably** as amended by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs by a vote of 43 - 1.

Rep. Julie Johnson (D-TX) **introduced** the USA 6G Global Leadership Act ([H.R. 8320](#)), which would require additional duties of the Ambassador at Large for Cyberspace and Digital Policy with respect to United States diplomatic efforts ahead of certain international conferences. The legislation was **reported favorably** by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs by a vote of 41 - 2.

Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL) introduced the Stopping Theft and Aerospace Reconnaissance Act (STAR) Act ([H.R. 8458](#)), which would amend title 51, United States Code, to authorize certain actions to

protect certain facilities and assets from unmanned aircraft.

Rep. Randy Weber (R-TX) **introduced** the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act (**H.R. 8462**), which would reauthorize the National Quantum Initiative Act and authorize NASA to advance quantum research by coordinating agency-wide efforts, developing a strategy in collaboration with other federal partners and potentially establishing a competitively selected quantum institute to support space and aeronautics applications, research, education and commercialization. The legislation was **reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably**, by voice vote.

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

---

## Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(April 20, 2026 - May 8, 2026)

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 Department of Defense (DoD) nuclear weapons programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program.

On April 20, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) held a closed **hearing** on the FY 2027 Budget Request for Compartmented Programs.

On April 21, SASC held open and closed **hearings** to examine United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and U.S. Forces Korea in review of the Defense Authorization Request for FY 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program.

On April 21, HPSCI held a closed **hearing** to examine the FY 2027 Budget Request for the Central Intelligence Agency.

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

On April 21, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) held a closed **hearing** on intelligence matters.

On April 21, the House Armed Services (HASC) Cyber, Information Technologies and Innovation Subcommittee held a **hearing** on the Cyber Posture of the Department of Defense.

On April 22, HASC held a **hearing** on the U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region.

On April 22, the HPSCI Defense Intelligence and Overhead Architecture Subcommittee held a

closed hearing on the FY 2027 Budget Request for the Military Services.

On April 22, the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology (SST) held a hearing to examine the FY 2027 Budget Request for NASA.

On April 22, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science (SAC-CJS) held a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for FY 2027 for the Department of Commerce (DOC).

On April 22, the HPSCI Defense Intelligence and Overhead Architecture Subcommittee held 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 HPSCI National Security Agency and Cyber Subcommittee held a closed hearing to examine the FY 2027 Budget Request for the National Security Agency.

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

On April 22, SSCI held a closed hearing on intelligence matters.

On April 23, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State and Related Programs held a hearing on the FY 2027 National Security, Department of State and Related Programs Bill.

On April 23, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (HAC-CJS) held a budget hearing on the DOC.

On April 27, HAC-CJS held a NASA budget hearing.

On April 27, the SASC Strategic Forces Subcommittee held a hearing to examine DoD missile defense activities in review of the Defense Authorization Request for FY 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program.

On April 27, HPSCI held a closed hearing to examine the FY 2027 Budget Request for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security.

On April 28, the House Appropriations Committee held a hearing on the FY 2027 National Security, Department of State and Related Programs Bill.

On April 28, the House SST Environment Subcommittee held a hearing to examine the FY 2027 Budget Request for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

On April 28, SASC held open and closed hearings to examine the posture of United States Special

Operations Command (USSOCOM) and United States Northern Command (USCYBERCOM) in review of the Defense Authorization Request for FY 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program.

On April 28, SAC-CJS held a [hearing](#) to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for FY 2027 for NASA.

On April 29, House SST held a full committee [markup](#) of the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act.

On April 29, the House Foreign Affairs (HFAC) Subcommittee on Europe held a [hearing](#) to examine Emerging Threats to U.S. Space Security and Foreign Policy Implications.

On April 29, the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection held a [hearing](#) on modernizing the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Sector Risk Management Agencies (SRMA) role for the communications and information technology (IT) sectors, including data centers, telecommunications networks and space-based systems.

On April 29, HASC held a [hearing](#) to examine the FY 2027 Budget Request for DoD.

On April 29, SSCI held a closed [hearing](#) on intelligence matters.

On April 30, HAC-CJS held a [markup](#) of the FY 2027 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Bill.

On April 30, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense (HAC-D) held a USAF and USSF budget [hearing](#).

On April 30, SASC held open and closed [hearings](#) to examine the DoD FY 2027 Budget Request and the Future Years Defense Program.

## In the White House/Executive Branch

### Articles and Quotes

#### [Trump Welcomes Artemis II Astronauts to Oval Office](#) (CNN)

On April 29, President Donald Trump hosted the Artemis II astronauts at the White House following their lunar mission, where he highlighted goals to return astronauts to the Moon and eventually reach Mars. NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman confirmed plans for a 2027 Artemis III test mission and a potential lunar landing in 2028, underscoring continued progress in the Artemis program.

#### [Artemis II Mission Is Giving NASA Clues About How To Design a Moon Base](#) (NBC News)

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said observations from the recent Artemis II mission are

informing the agency's plans to build a long-duration lunar base, including insights into environmental conditions such as micrometeorite impacts that could affect infrastructure design. Data collected during the crewed lunar flyby, including visible surface impacts, is helping refine models for future habitat construction, while broader mission findings are feeding into updated Artemis plans that include a 2027 orbital test mission and a targeted lunar landing in 2028. Isaacman also noted that lessons from the International Space Station (ISS) on long-duration human spaceflight are contributing to planning for sustained human presence on the Moon.

#### **FAA To Begin Collecting User Fees for Commercial Launches and Reentries** *(SpaceNews)*

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced it will begin collecting user fees for licensed commercial launches and reentries, implementing a provision from a recent budget reconciliation law that sets fees based on payload mass—initially 25 cents per pound, capped at \$30,000 per mission. The fees will apply to both new and existing licenses and are intended to support integration of launch activities into the national airspace system. Officials indicated that, while individual fees are relatively small, growing launch activity could generate significant revenue over time, with rates scheduled to increase annually through 2033. The move comes alongside a proposed increase in funding for the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation to expand staffing and support rising demand for launch licensing.

#### **FCC Throws Out Satellite Spectrum Challenges as D2D Dealmaking Heats Up** *(SpaceNews)*

On April 23, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a decision rejecting multiple requests to access or modify Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) spectrum, opting instead to preserve existing allocations for incumbent operators. The agency dismissed petitions seeking to preserve access to "Big LEO," 2 gigahertz and L-band frequencies, citing concerns about interference risks and potential impacts on existing services and investment. The order also denied additional requests for U.S. market access and spectrum use in certain bands, and terminated an inquiry related to one operator's spectrum holdings. Officials stated the decision is intended to provide regulatory certainty as the market for direct-to-device (D2D) satellite connectivity grows, while maintaining current licensing structures.

#### **Space Force Reveals \$3.2B in Space-Based Interceptor Awards for Golden Dome** *(Air & Space Forces Magazine)*

On April 24, USSF announced it has awarded 20 contracts worth up to \$3.2 billion to develop space-based interceptor capabilities as part of the Golden Dome missile defense initiative, with the goal of demonstrating an initial capability by 2028. Officials said the effort focuses on developing a proliferated low Earth orbit constellation capable of intercepting missiles during multiple phases of flight, and is using flexible acquisition authorities to engage a mix of traditional and nontraditional vendors. The program is intended to integrate space-based interceptors with existing missile defense systems and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, while emphasizing speed of development and continued competition among industry participants. Defense officials also noted that affordability and scalability will be key factors in determining the future scope of the interceptor capability as development progresses.

## **Federal Agency Space News**

## Federal Communications Commission

[FCC Modernizes Satellite Spectrum Sharing Rules to Boost Broadband](#) (April 30, 2026)

## National Aeronautics and Space Administration

[NASA, Partners Update International Space Station 2026 Flight Plan](#) (May 1, 2026)

[NASA Demonstrates New Prescribed Burn Capability for Spaceport](#) (April 29, 2026)

[NASA Fires Up Powerful Lithium-Fed Thruster for Trips to Mars](#) (April 28, 2026)

[Progress 95 Cargo Craft Launches to Resupply Station Crew](#) (April 25, 2026)

[NASA Rolls Out Artemis III Moon Rocket Core Stage](#) (April 20, 2026)

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[One Year of GOES-19 as the New GOES-East Satellite](#) (April 28, 2026)

## U.S Department of Defense

[Department of War Showcases Progress on Golden Dome for America, the Nation's Next-Generation Homeland Defense](#) (April 23, 2026)

[Department of War Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget](#) (April 21, 2026)

## U.S. Space Force

[Lt. Gen. Douglas A. Schiess Nominated to Be Next US Space Force Chief of Space Operations](#) (May 1, 2026)

[Historic Cape Canaveral Space Force Station Skid Strip Renovated for Modern Space Mission Needs](#) (April 28, 2026)

[Securing the Ultimate High Ground: How the Space Force is Revolutionizing Airborne Target Tracking](#) (April 27, 2026)

[Senior Enlisted Leaders Emphasize Partnership as Cornerstone of Space Superiority](#) (April 23, 2026)

## International

### Articles & Quotes

### **Germany Launches €35-Billion Military Space Program** *(DW News)*

Germany is planning a €35 billion (\$41 billion) investment in military space capabilities over the coming years to strengthen satellite security, cybersecurity, communications and early warning systems while reducing reliance on non-European providers. The initiative includes development of a national satellite network to support independent space operations for the Bundeswehr and reflects a broader effort to enhance strategic autonomy following lessons from recent conflicts and rising cyber threats, as well as increased focus on the importance of space-based infrastructure for national security.

### **China Speeds Up Development of Integrated ‘Space-Ground Network’** *(Global Times)*

China is accelerating development of an integrated “space-ground network” as part of its broader satellite internet strategy, aiming to deploy a constellation of more than 10,000 low Earth orbit satellites to provide continuous global broadband coverage. According to China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, recent engineering breakthroughs include phased array antennas that enable rapid signal switching and inter-satellite laser links that allow data transmission between satellites and the ground, forming a closed-loop communications system. Officials and industry experts indicated the effort is intended to support applications such as remote connectivity, disaster response and aviation communications, while also serving as a key component of future 6G infrastructure and expanding coverage to underserved regions including oceans, deserts and low-altitude airspace.

### **EU Steps Up Space Security as Congestion and Interference Rise** *(Euractiv)*

The European Union (EU) is increasing its focus on space security as rising orbital congestion, debris and satellite signal interference pose growing risks to critical services that rely on space-based infrastructure. Through the European Union Agency for the Space Programme, the EU is advancing a three-pillar approach that includes protecting space assets via surveillance and tracking systems, securing signals through authentication technologies for navigation services like Galileo, and ensuring resilient services through satellite communications initiatives such as the European Union Governmental Satellite Communications (GOVSATCOM). These efforts are intended to strengthen resilience against physical and cyber threats while supporting essential sectors including transportation, energy, defense and emergency response.

### **Russia Launches 3 Tons of Cargo to the International Space Station From Kazakhstan** *(Space.com)*

Russia launched a Progress cargo spacecraft carrying approximately three tons of food, propellant and supplies to the ISS on April 25 aboard a Soyuz rocket from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The spacecraft successfully docked with the station on April 27, marking the second such resupply mission of the year and continuing routine logistics operations supporting ISS crew and operations.

*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)

### 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

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

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: May 11, 2026

### Spaceport and Launch Assessment Study

Department of Defense

Close Date: May 15, 2026

### Spaceport and Launch Assessment Study Help (SPLASH)

Department of Defense

Close Date: May 20, 2026

### RFI - Environmental Satellite Ground Station

Department of Defense

Close Date: June 1, 2026

### Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (NBL) Facility Commercial Utilization

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: September 30, 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)

### 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

### GEOINT 2026

USGIF

May 3-6, 2026

### 2026 Space Economy Summit Europe

Portuguese Space Agency and ESA

May 5-6, 2026

### Schriever Spacepower Series Webinar

The Mitchell Institute

May 12, 2026

### 2026 Global Space Technology Convention & Exhibition

GSTCE

May 13-14, 2026

### AbSciCon 2026

AbSciCon

May 17-22, 2026

### Space Industry Forum 2026

GSOA and Novaspace

May 19, 2026

### 2026 ASCEND

AIAA

May 19-21, 2026

### SmallSat Europe 2026

SmallSat

May 26-28, 2026

### 2nd Latin American Conference on Space & Society

IAA

June 1-6, 2026

**Space Tech Expo USA**

**Space Tech Expo**

June 2-4, 2026

**2026 Global Space Conference on Climate Change**

**IAF**

June 2-4, 2026

**Space Capacity Allocation for the Sustainability of Space Activities Workshop**

**Secure World Foundation**

June 3-5, 2026

**44th International Space Development Conference**

**The National Space Society**

June 4-7, 2026

**U.N. Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

**COPUOS**

June 10-19, 2026

Learn more about our Space Law and Policy practice.

[Learn More](#)

**Questions?**

If you have any questions, please contact:

## Authors



**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**  
Partner  
Washington, D.C.



**Sean Carlesimo**  
Counsel  
Washington, D.C.



**Ryan Dowell**  
Counsel  
New York



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

## Contributors



**Sharanya Sriram**  
Associate  
Washington, D.C.



**Elizah H. Stein**  
Associate  
Washington, D.C.

**Kathryn Herman**  
Public Policy Fellow  
Washington, D.C.

[akingump.com](http://akingump.com)



©2026 Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP. All rights reserved. Attorney advertising. This document is distributed for informational use only; it does not constitute legal advice and should not be used as such. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. Receipt of this information does not create an attorney-client relationship. Do not act upon this information without seeking professional counsel. All content is presented by Akin and cannot be copied or rebroadcasted without express written consent. Akin is the practicing name of Akin Gump LLP, a New York limited liability partnership authorized and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority under number 267321. A list of the partners is available for inspection at Eighth Floor, Ten Bishops Square, London E1 6EG. For more information about Akin Gump LLP, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP and other associated entities under which the Akin network operates worldwide, please see our Legal Notices page.

[Update Your Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Legal Notices](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

This email was sent by: 2001 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006-1037