



Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

Good Afternoon!

It's been a busy two weeks across the space industry. Despite recent headlines, it looks like the throttles are all the way forward for space business. The Space Foundation reported that the global space industry grew 7.8% growth, reaching \$613 billion. U.S. government space spending accounts for more than half of that figure, and despite President Trump's plans to cut NASA's budget by almost 25 percent, House and Senate appropriators are advancing 2026 bills that keep funding near existing levels.

Space Force's top general in Europe encouraged NATO cooperation and advanced an "allied by design" approach to U.S. cooperation with Europe. Meanwhile China instituted new rules to ensure its surging commercial space industry remains aligned with national priorities.

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

[Moran wants to Expedite Passage of Spending Bill for NASA](#) (*SpaceNews*)

Sen. Jerry Moran, chair of the Senate appropriations subcommittee overseeing the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), expressed a strong desire to expedite passage of the agency's fiscal year (FY) 2026 spending bill during remarks at a Space Foundation event on July 22. Moran warned that delays could further erode the broader appropriations process and emphasized the importance of timely funding to support NASA's missions and workforce stability. His comments come as Congress begins debating major budget cuts proposed by the administration.

[Senate Appropriators Join House in Opposing Trump's NASA Cuts](#) (*Space Policy Online*)

Senate appropriators have joined the House in rejecting President Trump's proposed 24.3% cut to NASA's budget and major changes to the Artemis program. Instead, both chambers are advancing FY2026 bills that keep NASA funding near current levels—\$24.9 billion in the Senate and \$24.838 billion in the House. Senate appropriators reject the administration's plans to terminate the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket, Orion spacecraft and Gateway lunar station, and reaffirm support for ongoing science missions and international partnerships. While Congress shows bipartisan unity in preserving NASA's role, concerns remain about whether the White House will allow the agency to spend appropriated funds, especially amid growing use of rescission bills.

[Space Force, Congress Look to Address Growing Crunch on Launch Facilities](#) (*Air & Space Forces*)

With launch demand surging, both Congress and the U.S. Space Force are taking steps to modernize and expand national launch infrastructure. The FY2026 defense policy bills in both chambers direct studies of current launch capacity at Cape Canaveral and Vandenberg, while also exploring alternative sites like Wallops Island, VA, and Kodiak Island, AK. The Space Force's new "Principles for Space Access Resourcing Decisions" guide prioritizes national security launches and outlines plans for cost-sharing with commercial users. Congress has already allocated \$1.3 billion through 2028 for spaceport upgrades, and lawmakers continue to emphasize the need for both resilient infrastructure and strategic flexibility to meet growing defense and commercial launch needs.

Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

Rep. Daniel Webster (R-FL) has **introduced** the Frank Wolf Space Security Act (**H.R. 4360**), which prohibits NASA and OSTP from using federal funds to develop, design, plan, promulgate, implement or execute a bilateral policy, program, order or contract with China or any Chinese-owned company.

Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-OR) has **introduced** a resolution supporting the designation of July 20, 2025, as “National Moon Landing Day”, (**H. Res. 596**) which supports the designation of July 20, 2025, as “National Moon Landing Day.”

On July 15, 2025, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (**S. 2296**) was reported to Senate by Sen. Wicker (R-MS) with written **report No. 119-39**.

On July 17, 2025, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (**S. 2354**) was reported to Senate by Sen. Moran (R-KS) with written **report No. 119-44**.

On July 18, 2025, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2026 (**H.R. 4016**) **passed** the House of Representatives by a vote of 221 - 209.

On July 21, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 (**H.R. 4552**) was reported to the House by Rep. Steve Womack (R-AR) with written report **No. 119-212**.

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

Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(July 11, 2025 - July 25, 2025)

On July 15, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Science, Justice and related agencies held a **markup** of The Fiscal Year 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies **Bill**.

On July 22, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) held a closed **briefing** on intelligence matters.

On July 23, the House Committee on Armed Services (HASC) held a **hearing** on Reforming Defense Acquisition to Deliver Capability at the Speed of Relevance.

Also on July 23, SSCI held a closed **briefing** on intelligence matters.

In the White House/Executive Branch

Articles and Quotes

Guetlein Says Golden Dome Architecture Will Be Ready in 60 Days (*Space Policy Online*)

On July 22, Gen. Michael Guetlein, newly confirmed head of the Golden Dome missile defense initiative, announced he has 60 days to deliver an architecture plan for the \$175 billion program aimed at protecting the U.S. from advanced missile threats by 2028. Speaking at the Space Foundation’s Global Economic Summit, Guetlein said the technologies, especially space-based interceptors, already exist and that his direct reporting role to the Deputy Secretary of Defense allows rapid decision-making. While emphasizing scalability and cost-efficiency as top technical hurdles, he also highlighted the need for cross-agency command and control integration. Congress has provided \$25 billion in initial funding through reconciliation, though some lawmakers remain skeptical of the feasibility and strategic risks.

Space Development Agency’s Satellite Network Reaching ‘Make-or-Break’ Moment (*SpaceNews*)

The Space Development Agency (SDA) is approaching a pivotal moment as it prepares to begin launching its first Tranche 1 satellites within weeks. These deployments will test the agency’s goal of creating a low-cost, resilient satellite network in low Earth orbit to support missile tracking and other national security missions. Space Force acquisition chief Maj. Gen. Stephen Purdy called this a “make-or-break” phase for the program, which aims to revolutionize U.S. space architecture through rapid, scalable, and commercially driven deployments. Success could validate SDA’s approach as a model for future military space systems.

NASA Goddard Director to Step Down *(SpaceNews)*

Makenzie Lystrup, who became director of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center in April 2023, has announced she will step down effective August 1. Her departure comes amid growing concern, expressed by hundreds of current and former NASA employees, about the agency’s direction under the current administration. This leadership change occurs as NASA faces critical budget and strategic decisions.

Air Force Inspector General Tapped to Lead Global Strike Command *(Air & Space Forces)*

Lt. Gen. Stephen L. Davis, currently serving as the Air Force Inspector General, has been nominated to lead Air Force Global Strike Command, overseeing U.S. bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles. If confirmed, Davis would succeed Gen. Thomas Bussiere, recently tapped as the next vice chief of staff. His nomination comes as the service navigates major transitions in its nuclear enterprise, including the delayed Sentinel ICBM and incoming B-21 bomber. The Pentagon also nominated Lt. Gen. Andrew Gebara to serve as Director of Staff on the Air Staff and Brig. Gen. Max Pearson to be promoted directly to lieutenant general as Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence. Together, the three officers bring deep nuclear and intelligence expertise to top leadership roles at a time of rising strategic demand.

Federal Agency Space News

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASA Seeks Industry Concepts on Moon, Mars Communications (July 23, 2025)

Key Milestones for Upcoming NASA’s TRACERS Mission (July 22, 2025)

NASA Mission Ready to Study Space Weather Impacts on Earth (July 22, 2025)

NASA Goddard Center Director Makenzie Lystrup Set to Depart (July 21, 2025)

U.S. Space Force

Space Force Releases Principles for Space Access Resourcing Decisions (July 16, 2025)

Modernized GPS Operating System Closer to Operational Integration (July 14, 2025)

Space Systems Command Set to Strengthen Operational Environment with Enhanced Global Weather Sensing (July 3, 2025)

U.S. Department of Defense

General Guetlein to Lead the Office of Golden Dome for America (July 22, 2025)

International

Articles & Quotes

China Tightens Quality Oversight Over Commercial Space Projects *(SpaceNews)*

China has introduced new rules to tighten quality oversight across its fast-growing commercial space industry. The move aims to standardize private sector activity and improve reliability as Chinese companies pursue increasingly complex projects. The guidelines reflect Beijing’s effort to align commercial space development with national goals and prevent high-profile failures as launch rates and global competition increase.

Top Space Force General in Europe Working on ‘Common Ground’ with Allies, NATO *(Air & Space Forces)*

Brig. Gen. Jacob Middleton, head of U.S. Space Forces Europe and Africa, emphasized a federated, “allied by design” approach to space operations during a July 22 Mitchell Institute event. While the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) finalizes its space strategy, the U.S. is working with allies to develop interoperable space capabilities that balance national sovereignty with alliance-wide goals. Middleton noted that cooperation with U.S. Space Command is increasing, particularly as European allies pursue satellite defense and space domain awareness. He stressed that the evolving U.S.-allied architecture must be ready to integrate into NATO’s eventual space framework.

The Global Space Economy Hits a New Record *(SpaceNews)*

The global space economy reached a record high in 2024, growing 7.8% year-over-year, according to the newly released Space Report 2025 Q2. In a conversation on Space Minds, Space Foundation

CEO Heather Pringle highlighted the rise of commercial activity, surging launch frequency, international investment and major initiatives like Golden Dome as key drivers behind the industry’s rapid expansion.

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)

Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) Part 237, Service Contracting, and Related Clauses
Department of Defense
Close Date: August 5, 2025

Standard Missile 6 (SM-6) Increased Production Capacity (IPC #1)
Department of Defense
Close Date: August 8, 2025

Executive Order 14265, Modernizing Defense Acquisitions and Spurring Innovation in the Defense Industrial Base
Department of Defense
Close Date: August 8, 2025

Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

CIS Capability Studies IV: Lunar Trunkline Communication Architectures and Mars End-to-End Communication Service Architectures
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Close Date: August 13, 2025

Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)

No new proposed rules.

Upcoming Space Events

Launch of Crew-11 to ISS
NASA
July 31, 2025

Securing Space: Threats, Strategic Roles and Building Resilience
INSA
August 6, 2025

Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee (AAAC)
AAAC
August 15, 2025

39th Annual Small Satellite Conference
SmallSat
August 10-13, 2025

Glenn Space Technology Symposium
AAS
September 8-10, 2025

Outer Space Security Conference
UNIDIR
September 9-10, 2025

2025 EMER-GEN Conference
AMOS & SGAC
September 14-16, 2025

NASA EXMAG Meeting
NASA
September 15-17

World Space Business Week
Novaspace

September 15-17

Space Defense and Security Summit
SDSS

September 16-17

2025 AMOS Conference
AMOS

September 16-19

Space Logistics Conference
SMG

September 18-19

UNL Space Law Conference
UNL

September 18

2025 Air, Space, Cyber Convention
AFA

September 22-24

2025 International Astronautical Congress
IAF

September 29-October 3

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Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

Authors



Michael Mineiro
Senior Counsel
Washington, D.C.



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
Senior Counsel
Washington, D.C.



Ryan Dowell
Counsel
New York



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

Contributors



Chase Hamilton
Associate
Washington, D.C.



Sharanya Sriram
Associate
Washington, D.C.

Kathryn Herman
Public Policy Fellow
Washington, D.C.

akingump.com



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