



Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

Good Afternoon!

The business of space got a boost on August 13 when the Trump Administration published its EO intended to revamp commercial space regulations. The Administration and Congress continue to square off about NASA's budget and future direction.

Outside of Washington, China launched a pair of Mexican satellites and concerns about warfare in the space domain proliferate as the U.S., Russian and Chinese ambitions touch off a new space race.

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

[Space Force 2026 Budget: an \\$11B Boon or Bubble?](#) (SpaceNews)

The U.S. Space Force is set to receive \$39.9 billion in funding for fiscal year (FY) 2026, marking an increase of \$11.3 billion over the previous year. The funding comprises \$26.1 billion in traditional discretionary spending and \$13.8 billion in mandatory funding included in the July 4 reconciliation bill. This dual-stream budget approach is being referred to by officials as "one budget, two bills."

Budget Battle: Trump Administration vs. Congress Over NASA Funding *(Open Tools)*

The Trump administration's FY 2026 budget proposal would cut the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) funding by 25%, including a 47% reduction to science programs, in favor of accelerating lunar and Mars exploration; however, the proposal has drawn strong bipartisan opposition in Congress, which has rejected the cuts and pushed for near-level funding, citing concerns over U.S. space leadership, constitutional authority and the loss of over 2,000 NASA personnel due to funding uncertainty; lawmakers argue the cuts threaten American innovation, cede strategic ground to China, and violate Congress's constitutional power of the purse, while legal and political challenges continue to unfold as experts and the public warn that sacrificing science for short-term exploration goals risks long-term damage to NASA's capabilities and U.S. competitiveness in the global space race.

Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

No new legislation noticed.

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

Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(August 8, 2025 - September 2, 2025)

No hearings noticed.

In the White House/Executive Branch

Articles and Quotes

White House Issues Long-Awaited Order to Revamp Commercial Space Regs *(Akin)*

On August 13, 2025, the Trump administration issued an Executive Order aimed at overhauling the regulatory landscape for the U.S. commercial space sector, with the central objective of streamlining license and permit approvals for launches and reentries. Titled "Enabling Competition in the Commercial Space Industry," the Order mandates that agencies "eliminate or expedite" environmental reviews, paving the way for faster approval timelines. It creates a new commercial-space deregulation advisor within the Department of Transportation and elevates the Commerce Department's Office of Space Commerce into the Secretary's office, while leaving the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Office of Commercial Space Transportation intact. Within 150 days the Commerce Secretary is to propose a streamlined process for authorizing novel space activities not clearly governed by current regulations to bolster American space competitiveness.

Outside Perspectives Shape Space Force's Top Wargame *(Air & Space Forces)*

The U.S. Space Force's premier Schriever Wargame, held August 10-21 at Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB), is expanding to include broader perspectives from enlisted personnel, international allies and commercial industry. This year's exercise involves nine partner nations, including first-time observers Italy and Norway, and explores five notional advanced technologies related to space domain awareness and communications. The wargame emphasizes multinational operations and integration, with officials highlighting efforts to move toward jointly setting objectives by 2027. Commercial participants, acting as independent stakeholders rather than company representatives, are helping align future industry capabilities with allied defense needs. Space Force leaders say these efforts reflect a strategic push to make the force "allied by design" and increasingly reliant on commercial and international collaboration.

Duffy Says Climate Science Will 'Move Aside,' With NASA Only Focusing on Space Exploration *(The Hill)*

Acting NASA Administrator Sean Duffy announced that NASA will pivot away from climate and Earth science to focus exclusively on space exploration. Speaking on Fox Business, Duffy said all science at the agency will now be "directed towards exploration," asserting that "that's why we have NASA." This marks a significant shift in NASA's longstanding role in advancing climate science alongside its space missions. The move aligns with broader Trump administration efforts to downplay climate change and reduce environmental oversight, including recent initiatives to curtail environmental reviews for commercial space activity.

Searching for Golden Dome Clues *(Politico)*

The Pentagon has unveiled early details of its ambitious "Golden Dome" missile defense initiative, outlining five major components: space-based interceptors, upper-tier defenses, an underlay layer, new Army units to defend U.S. cities, and a centralized command-and-control system. At a recent industry information session, the Missile Defense Agency projected \$151 billion in potential contracts and revealed plans for a new radar and missile site in the southeastern U.S. However, industry representatives expressed frustration over a lack of specifics, especially regarding system integration, agency roles, and the legal authority of Gen. Michael Guetlein's new Golden Dome office, which was absent from the briefing. Officials cited the early development phase and operational security as reasons for withholding further information, though a request for proposals is expected by early September.

Federal Agency Space News

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Expedition 73 Tracks Health and Gears Up for Cargo Missions (August 18, 2025)

NASA, Army National Guard Partner on Flight Training for Moon Landing (August 18, 2025)

NASA Seeks Industry Feedback on Fission Surface Power (August 14, 2025)

[Space Station Cell Studies](#) (August 11, 2025)

Federal Aviation Administration

[U.S. Transportation Secretary & Acting NASA Administrator Sean P. Duffy Joins President Trump Executive Order Signing to Boost U.S. Space Competitiveness](#) (August 14, 2025)

[U.S. Transportation Secretary Duffy, FAA Celebrate Milestone of 1,000th Commercial Space Operation](#) (August 14, 2025)

U.S. Space Force

[U.S. Space Force Prepares X-37B Mission 8 for Launch](#) (August 14, 2025)

[Space Systems Command, United Launch Alliance Launch USSF-106 mission Aboard Vulcan Rocket](#) (August 13, 2025)

[Schriever Wargame 2025 to Explore Future Space Strategy, Strengthen International Partnerships](#) (August 11, 2025)

The White House

[Enabling Competition In The Commercial Space Industry](#) (August 13, 2025)

International

Articles & Quotes

[Chinese Rocket Carries Innovative Mexican Satellites Into Orbit](#) (*China Daily*)

China's CAS Space launched seven satellites aboard its Kinetica 1 rocket on August 20, including two lightweight satellites developed by Mexico-based ThumbSat. The launch from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center marks the eighth mission for the Kinetica 1 and underscores growing international cooperation in commercial space. The ThumbSat-1 and ThumbSat-2 satellites, weighing just 100 grams each, carry a selfie camera and an artistic payload, respectively. CAS Space emphasized the significance of this collaboration as a milestone for China's entry into the North American commercial space market. The mission also included a synthetic aperture radar satellite, an Earth-observation satellite, and five experimental payloads. CAS Space noted that the Kinetica 1 remains China's leading commercial rocket for small and mid-size satellites, having now deployed over 70 satellites in total.

[Hijacked Satellites and Orbiting Space Weapons: in the 21st Century, Space is the New Battlefield](#) (*Associated Press*)

Amid rising geopolitical tensions, space is increasingly viewed as a critical domain for modern

warfare, with recent events underscoring its vulnerability. In May, pro-Russian hackers hijacked a Ukrainian satellite signal during Russia's Victory Day parade, highlighting the ease with which satellite systems can be disrupted. The U.S. warns that Russia is developing a nuclear space-based weapon capable of wiping out most low-Earth orbit satellites, a threat that would violate international treaties and cripple global communications and defense capabilities. As the race intensifies, the U.S., China and Russia are expanding their presence in space, with plans for lunar bases and nuclear-powered infrastructure to support future missions. The U.S. Space Force, established in 2019, is tasked with defending space assets, while the X-37B unmanned spaceplane continues conducting classified missions. Officials emphasize that protecting satellites and space infrastructure is vital to national security and economic stability as nations eye the moon and beyond for strategic resources.

Russia Set to Launch "Noah's Ark" Mission: Mice, Fruit Flies, and Lunar Simulants to Explore Space *(Daily Galaxy)*

Russia is preparing to launch its Bion-M No. 2 biosatellite, nicknamed the "Noah's Ark" mission, on August 20, 2025, carrying 75 mice, over 1,000 fruit flies, and lunar simulants into orbit to study the effects of microgravity and radiation on living organisms and construction materials. The 30-day mission, launched aboard a Soyuz-2.1b rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, aims to generate critical data for long-duration spaceflight and lunar habitation. Mice will be divided into three groups: Earth-based, Earth-based simulated, and in-orbit, with onboard sensors and chips collecting real-time health data. The mission also includes lunar simulants to evaluate how moon-like materials react to the vacuum and radiation of space, with post-return analysis supporting future lunar construction efforts. By increasing radiation exposure tenfold over previous missions, the data collected is expected to guide the development of new space health and safety technologies.

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)

Commercially Available Space Domain Awareness Sensing, Data and Analysis

Department of Defense

Close Date: September 15, 2025

Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (NBL) Facility Commercial Utilization

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: November 28, 2025

Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

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

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: August 29, 2025

NASA Launch Services II (NLS-II) 2025 On-Ramp

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: September 18, 2025

Proposal for Lease of the Flight Research Facility (Hangar) at Glenn Research Center (GRC)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: December 13, 2025

Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)

No new proposed rules.

Upcoming Space Events

FAA Public Mtgs On Draft Eis For Starship/Super Heavy Ops

FAA

August 26, 2025

Space Industry & Govt Summit & Expo

Tech Connect

August 27-29, 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, 2025

World Space Business Week

Novaspace

September 15-17, 2025

Space Defense and Security Summit

SDSS

September 16-17, 2025

2025 AMOS Conference

AMOS

September 16-19, 2025

Space Logistics Conference

SMG

September 18-19, 2025

UNL Space Law Conference

UNL

September 18, 2025

2025 Air, Space, Cyber Convention

AFA

September 22-24, 2025

2025 International Astronautical Congress

IAF

September 29 - October 3, 2025

International Observe the Moon Night

NASA

October 4, 2025

The Day of Action to Save NASA Science

The Planetary Society

October 4-6, 2025

International Mars Society Convention

The Mars Society

October 9-11, 2025

9th Interstellar Symposium

IRG/IAA

October 12-15, 2025

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Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

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