



## Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

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Good Afternoon!

*Recent policy developments highlight a growing convergence between government priorities and commercial space capabilities. Congressional action in the FY 2027 NDAA is preserving key satellite programs while pushing the Space Force toward greater reliance on commercial data and services. At the same time, NASA is seeking additional funding to sustain its lunar ambitions and advancing Artemis III with continued dependence on commercial partners. Internationally, China's push into space-enabled 6G infrastructure underscores the accelerating global competition in next-generation space technologies.*

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

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### On The Hill

#### Articles and Quotes

##### [HASC NDAA Markup Challenges Space Force on Satellite Programs](#) (*SpaceNews*)

The House Armed Services Committee's (HASC) fiscal year (FY) 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) would preserve funding for the Space Force's Next-Generation Overhead Persistent Infrared (OPIR) Polar missile-warning satellite program, authorizing \$415 million despite the Pentagon's proposal to terminate the effort. Lawmakers argued the system remains important for missile-warning coverage over the polar regions and cited concerns about growing Chinese and Russian counterspace capabilities. The committee also questioned the Space Force's procurement strategy for the Protected Tactical Satellite Communications (SATCOM)-Global (PTS-G) program, criticizing the decision to acquire only two satellites after promoting the program as a more resilient, proliferated communications architecture. As a result, the committee directed the Space Force to provide a report outlining plans for a distributed tactical satellite communications network and options for accelerating additional procurements. The NDAA further includes provisions aimed at improving oversight of the military's positioning, navigation, and timing enterprise by requiring the Department of War (DoW) to designate a single official responsible for managing global positioning system (GPS)-related capabilities and reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies.

### **NASA Quietly Talking to Congress About More Moon Money** (*Politico*)

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has reportedly begun discussions with Congress about securing additional funding, potentially totaling several billion dollars, to support the Trump administration's goal of returning astronauts to the moon by 2028. According to congressional sources, the funding would help accelerate development of a simplified lunar lander design and address schedule pressures created by the recent explosion at Blue Origin's New Glenn launch complex. NASA is examining alternative launch options and revised lander architectures to keep planned 2027 test missions and a 2028 lunar landing on track. While Congress provided nearly \$10 billion for NASA through last year's reconciliation package, lawmakers are expected to closely scrutinize any additional funding request, particularly questions surrounding lander redesign costs and the impact of Blue Origin's launch delays. NASA stated that it remains in regular communication with Congress regarding efforts to achieve the administration's lunar exploration objectives and future lunar base plans.

### **Lawmakers Push Space Force to Seek More Commercial Integration** (*Air & Space Forces Magazine*)

HASC lawmakers used the FY 2027 NDAA markup to push the Space Force toward greater integration of commercial space capabilities, approving several amendments that would require new plans, studies and briefings on the use of commercial technology for space domain awareness, satellite operations, sensing and communications. The legislation directs the Space Force to develop a strategy for incorporating more commercial data into its High Accuracy Catalog, transition commercial space domain awareness pilot programs into operational capabilities and provide a five-year funding plan for commercial services. Lawmakers also expressed concern that the Space Force's FY 2027 budget request does not fully align with DoW and Space Force strategies promoting commercial integration, particularly given proposed reductions to key commercial initiatives. The committee called for additional reporting on how the service plans to sustain and expand commercial partnerships, reflecting congressional pressure to accelerate adoption of commercial capabilities and strengthen the role of nontraditional space companies in national security missions.

### **Senate to Mark Up NDAA for FY 2027** (*Legis1*)

The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) began its closed markup of the FY 2027 NDAA on June 10, marking the next major step in Congress's annual defense policy process. Lawmakers are expected to release only topline funding figures and a summary of major provisions initially, with detailed bill text and committee report language to follow later. The Senate bill will provide an early indication of congressional priorities on defense spending, military modernization and national security programs, while setting the stage for eventual negotiations with the House, which approved its version of the NDAA on June 4. The House-Senate conference process is expected to become a key battleground for restoring, modifying or eliminating programs as lawmakers work toward a final defense authorization measure.

### **Committee Releases FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Bill** (House Appropriations Committee)

On June 10, House Appropriations Committee Republicans released their FY 2027 Defense appropriations bill, providing \$1.072 trillion in discretionary funding for the Department of

Defense ahead of a June 11 subcommittee markup. The legislation prioritizes investments in advanced military capabilities, including more than \$7.5 billion for hypersonic weapons and test infrastructure, over \$1.7 billion for defense innovation initiatives, \$1 billion for the Defense Autonomous Warfare Group, and \$1.4 billion for Joint Interagency Task Force 401 focused on countering unmanned systems. The bill also supports military pay raises, defense industrial base programs, business modernization efforts and counter-drug operations. In addition, the measure advances several Trump administration priorities, including artificial intelligence (AI) innovation, space superiority, defense acquisition modernization and restrictions on funding for diversity, equity and inclusion programs. The bill will be considered by the Defense Subcommittee on June 11.

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## Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) introduced a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to carry out an operational pilot program under the Hybrid Space Architecture initiative to evaluate the use of commercially available orbital data center services and space-based cloud computing capabilities relevant to national security space and joint mission requirements, and for other purposes ([S. 4693](#)).

Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV) **introduced** the Optimizing Acquisition Strategies for Integrated Security (OASIS) in the Middle East Act ([S. 4681](#)), which would require the Secretary of Defense to take action to improve air and missile defense acquisition.

Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH) **introduced** the Advancing American Wi-Fi Against Foreign Adversaries Act ([H.R. 9151](#)), which would require the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, to develop a plan for how the United States will advance and advocate for Wi-Fi and other unlicensed technologies.

Rep. Steve Womack (R-AR) **introduced** the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2027 ([H.R. 9170](#)), which would make appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2027. The bill was **placed** on the Union Calendar, No. 598.

Rep. Mike Kennedy (R-UT) **introduced** the Powering the Future of American Space Dominance Act ([H.R. 9193](#)), which aims to advance NASA's use of nuclear propulsion and power systems for deep space exploration.

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

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## Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(June 1, 2026 - June 19, 2026)

On June 2, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense (SAC-D) held a closed **hearing** to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for FY 2027 for the Intelligence Community.

On June 2, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) held a **hearing** to consider the nomination of Dr. Roger Mason to be Director of the National Reconnaissance Office and Mr. Michael Vance to be Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research.

On June 3, the House Appropriations Committee held a **markup** of the FY 2027 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies bill.

On June 3, SSCI held a closed **briefing** on intelligence matters.

On June 4, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) held a **markup** of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2027 (**H.R. 8800**). The committee reported the bill favorably to the House by a vote of 44 - 12.

On June 8, the Senate Armed Services (SASC) Subcommittee on Strategic Forces held a closed **markup** of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2027.

On June 9, the SASC Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a closed **markup** of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2027.

On June 9, the SASC Subcommittee on Airland held a closed **markup** of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2027.

On June 9, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation (CST) Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Freight, Pipelines, and Safety held a **hearing** to examine how technological advances are driving transportation innovation.

On June 9, SAC-D held a **hearing** to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for FY 2027 for the Department of the Air Force.

On June 9 and 10, SASC held a closed **markup** of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2027.

On June 10, the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology (SST) held a **hearing** on the Department of Energy's FY 2027 budget request.

On June 11, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense (HAC-D) held a closed **markup** of the FY 2027 Defense bill.

On June 16, the SASC Subcommittee on Airland will hold a **hearing** to examine Army force modernization in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2027 and the Future Years Defense Program.

## In the White House/Executive Branch

### Articles and Quotes

#### **NASA Announces Astronauts for Its Artemis III Mission To Test New Moon Landers** *(NBC News)*

On Tuesday, June 9, NASA announced the four-person crew for Artemis III, the agency's next major lunar mission, which is now planned as a 2027 Earth-orbit test flight rather than a lunar landing. The crew will include Randy Bresnik as commander, Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency (ESA) as pilot, and Frank Rubio and Andre Douglas as mission specialists. Artemis III will test rendezvous and docking operations with lunar landers being developed by SpaceX and Blue Origin, a critical step toward NASA's planned Artemis IV lunar landing mission in 2028. The announcement underscores NASA's accelerated lunar strategy under Administrator Jared Isaacman, who has restructured the Artemis program to increase launch cadence and maintain a competitive timeline against China's crewed lunar ambitions. NASA officials emphasized that the mission will validate key technologies and operational concepts needed to support future lunar surface operations and the agency's broader goal of establishing a sustained human presence on the Moon.

#### **NRO Nominee Says Commercial Space, AI Are Reshaping Spy Satellite Agency** *(SpaceNews)*

Roger Mason, President Trump's nominee to lead the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), told the Senate Intelligence Committee that the agency is undergoing a significant transformation driven by advances in commercial space capabilities and artificial intelligence. Mason emphasized that the NRO's expanding constellation of more than 200 low Earth orbit (LEO) imaging satellites is generating increasing amounts of data, making AI and machine learning essential for managing satellite operations, prioritizing intelligence collection and accelerating data analysis. He also stressed the importance of maintaining strong partnerships with commercial industry and providing clear long-term demand signals to encourage private-sector investment in emerging space technologies. Additionally, Mason highlighted the need to strengthen the resilience of U.S. space-based intelligence systems against growing threats such as anti-satellite weapons, cyberattacks and electronic warfare, noting that the NRO is pursuing more distributed satellite architectures to ensure continued operations in a contested space environment.

#### **Spaceport Crunch Reviving Interest in Sea-Based Launch** *(SpaceNews)*

Concerns about growing demand on U.S. launch infrastructure are driving renewed interest in sea-based rocket launch capabilities as a way to expand launch capacity and improve resiliency. With commercial satellite constellations, national security launches and future missile defense requirements expected to increase significantly over the next decade, industry and defense officials are exploring offshore launch platforms as a potential complement to existing spaceports. Sea-based launch systems could provide greater flexibility, reduce congestion at current launch ranges, support a wider range of orbital trajectories, and offer a more distributed launch architecture in the event of natural disasters or military conflict. Interest in the concept is also being shaped by China's progress in offshore launch operations, where maritime launch

infrastructure has supported multiple orbital missions and is being expanded to accommodate larger launch vehicles. While technical, regulatory and operational challenges remain, advocates argue that offshore launch platforms could help address future capacity constraints and support the growing demand for commercial and national security space access.

#### **New Commander Takes the Reins at Air Force Research Lab** *(Air & Space Forces Magazine)*

The Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) formally installed Brig. Gen. Douglas Wickert as its new commander on June 3, marking a leadership transition as the organization implements a major restructuring aimed at accelerating the delivery of advanced technologies to Air Force and Space Force operators. Wickert, previously Director of Air, Space and Cyber Operations at Air Force Materiel Command, emphasized AFRL's role in shaping future warfighting capabilities through innovation and technology development. The leadership change comes as AFRL executes a reorganization initiated under outgoing commander Brig. Gen. Jason Bartolomei, consolidating research organizations and aligning the laboratory with the Department of the Air Force's acquisition transformation efforts. The new structure is intended to strengthen coordination between research, acquisition and operational communities, improve technology transition pathways and accelerate the fielding of high-priority science and technology capabilities.

#### **NASA Reverts to Original CLD Procurement Plan** *(Payload Space)*

NASA has reversed course on proposed changes to its Commercial LEO Destinations (CLD) program and will continue pursuing its original strategy of supporting free-flying commercial space stations as successors to the International Space Station (ISS). The decision follows significant industry pushback to a March proposal that would have shifted NASA toward procuring a commercial module attached to the ISS rather than supporting standalone stations. Commercial providers argued that a viable low Earth orbit market already exists and that free-flying stations are essential to maintaining a competitive commercial ecosystem after the ISS is retired. NASA officials indicated that industry feedback helped shape the decision, and the agency is now expected to move forward with the original CLD acquisition approach. NASA plans to work with industry to refine requirements and is expected to release a draft request for proposals later this month, providing greater clarity on the next phase of the post-ISS transition strategy.

#### **Location of NASA's New Headquarters Will Be Determined by the End of the Year** *(Universe Space Tech)*

NASA officials expect to determine the location of the agency's future headquarters by the end of 2026 as part of a broader reorganization effort led by Administrator Jared Isaacman. With the current Washington, D.C., headquarters lease expiring in 2028, NASA is evaluating alternative office space within the Washington area and plans to move into a smaller, more efficient facility. Agency officials have indicated that some headquarters personnel may be relocated to the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland, where existing facilities could be renovated to accommodate additional staff. The headquarters relocation effort aligns with NASA's recent organizational restructuring, which aims to streamline operations and reduce administrative overhead while maintaining proximity to key federal stakeholders. NASA has assigned former Deputy Administrator Dave Mitchell to lead the relocation planning effort, with a final site selection expected before the end of the year.

## Federal Agency Space News

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

[Artemis III Crew Announced](#) (June 9, 2026)

[NASA Wallops to Support June Rocket Launch](#) (June 9, 2026)

[NASA's INCUS Satellites Progress Toward Launch](#) (June 8, 2026)

[NASA Provides Update on Space Station Leak](#) (June 5, 2026)

National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

[NGA to Host Industry Day July 10](#) (May 29, 2026)

Office of Space Commerce

[TraCSS Goes Global: International Government Onboarding Begins](#) (June 9, 2026)

U.S Department of Defense

[DOW Releases List of Chinese Military Companies in Accordance With Section 1260H of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021](#) (June 8, 2026)

[Memorandum: Enhancing Workforce Development Through the Department of War Project Patriot Pipeline](#) (June 3, 2026)

U.S. Space Force

[DAF Senior Leaders Explain, Justify Sizable Budget Boost in Senate Hearing](#) (June 9, 2026)

[US Space Forces-Space Senior Leaders Align Command Strategy, Warfighting Readiness](#) (June 9, 2026)

[Hatcher Takes Command at Space Forces Korea](#) (June 3, 2026)

## International

### Articles & Quotes

[After Cooperation on SMILE Mission, ESA and China Chart Parallel but Separate Paths](#) (*SpaceNews*)

The successful launch of the joint European Space Agency (ESA)-China Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (SMILE) magnetosphere mission marks the culmination of more than a decade of cooperation between the two organizations on space science, but both sides appear to be pursuing largely independent paths for future exploration efforts. ESA and the Chinese Academy of Sciences highlighted the scientific value of the collaboration and expressed interest in future cooperation, though no follow-on mission has been identified and funding remains a challenge. Both organizations are advancing ambitious science and exploration programs focused on areas such as exoplanet research, planetary exploration, habitability and space weather, with only limited opportunities for future collaboration. While some coordination may occur on upcoming missions to Jupiter and other scientific endeavors, Europe and China increasingly appear focused on developing their own capabilities and long-term space strategies, reflecting broader budgetary, political and strategic considerations.

#### **Astronauts Return to ISS After Sheltering During Air Leak Repair Attempt** (BBC)

Five astronauts aboard the ISS temporarily sheltered in a docked SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft on June 5 after air leakage rates increased in the PrK transfer tunnel of the Russian Zvezda service module. NASA directed the crew to assume a precautionary “safe haven” posture while two Russian cosmonauts prepared to conduct more extensive repairs on the long-running leak issue, which has affected the Russian segment since 2019. Concerns over the repair approach, which involved accessing the affected area for structural work, prompted NASA to place the astronauts on standby for a potential evacuation. The repair effort was later paused, and after additional assessments by Roscosmos, NASA cleared the crew to return to normal operations aboard the station.

#### **China Begins Large-Scale Delivery of Gallium Chips for Space-Ground 6G Network** (South China Morning Post)

China has delivered 5 million gallium nitride semiconductors for use in smart terminals supporting a planned space-air-ground integrated 6G network, marking the first large-scale commercial deployment of the chips. Developed by the No. 55 Research Institute of China Electronics Technology Group Corporation and Nanjing Guobo Electronics, the semiconductors are intended to support an integrated information network connecting space, air and ground systems. According to Chinese state media, the chips will serve as a foundation for next-generation 6G communications, commercial space programs, low-altitude economy applications and emergency communications. The report noted that the chips could be used in devices that supplement communications coverage in areas where traditional cellular signals are unavailable.

*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)**

**Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) RFI for Space Launch Complex-9 (SLC-9) Out Grant**  
Department of Defense

Close Date: July 8, 2026

**Strategic Partnerships for NASA Data Center Infrastructure**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: July 17, 2026

**Combatant Commanders Integrated Command and Control System (CCIC2S) Service Life Extension Program (SLEP)**

Department of Defense

Close Date: July 20, 2026

**NASA To Research, Evaluate, Assess, and Treat (TREAT) Astronauts Act**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: August 10, 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)**

**AI Data Center Development at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, Eielson Air Force Base, and Clear Space Force Station**

Department of Defense

Close Date: June 29, 2026

**Network Extension for User Continuity and Sustainability (NEXUS) Backward-Compatible Ka-Band Relay Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: July 7, 2026

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

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: September 5, 2026

**Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)**

No new proposed rules.

# Upcoming Space Events

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

COPUOS

June 10-19, 2026

## 9th Prague Space Security Conference

Prague Security Studies Institute

June 14-16, 2026

## The India Space Congress

Space Industry Association-India

June 15-17, 2026

## NASA Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel

NASA

June 22, 2026

## European Lunar Symposium 2026

European Lunar Symposium

June 22-26, 2026

## 6th Annual EU Space Forum

EU Space Forum

June 30 - July 1, 2026

## Space Renaissance International IV World Congress

Space Renaissance International

June 30-July 4, 2026

## 27th International Space Planes and Hypersonics Systems and Technology Conference

AIAA

July 7-10, 2026

## Space Investors Forum

NSSA

July 21, 2026

## Securing Space and Protecting Our World: Cyber Security Across Space and Terrestrial Systems

GW Space Policy Institute

The Aerospace Corporation

July 21, 2026

## Humans to the Moon and Mars (H2M2) Summit

Explore Mars

July 21-23, 2026

## 2026 NASA Exploration Science Forum

NASA

July 21-23, 2026

## COPSAR 2026

Committee on Space Research

August 1-9, 2026

## 2026 Taiwan Lunar Symposium

Taiwan Space Union

August 9-13, 2026

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## Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

## Authors



Thomas McCarthy  
Partner  
Washington, D.C.



Carlos Bermudez  
Partner  
Los Angeles



Sean Conway  
Partner  
Washington, D.C.



**Jennifer Richter**  
Partner  
Washington, D.C.



**Hans Rickhoff**  
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.

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