

Rep Jim Bridenstine, OK-01

Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Price, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today.

When most think of infrastructure, they think of roads, bridges, tunnels, ports, and airports. Without a doubt, those are important. But at this point in our nation's history, we are focused on maintaining those pieces of infrastructure. If we are to truly unleash innovation in this nation, we need to be thinking about infrastructure innovatively, and space is a component of that.

Space has transformed our standard of living and has become so integral to modern life that many of the services we rely on could not function without space. It has changed how we do everything from navigation and banking to national security and disaster relief. In recent years, much of this transformation has been due the commercial space industry.

The FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation, FAA/AST, is the entity responsible for both regulating and facilitating this industry. At present, this office does not have the adequate resources to effectively carry out these duties. This will only get worse as commercial space activity continues to grow thanks to the exceptionalism of the American people and entrepreneurs.

Each year, millions of dollars flow overseas to foreign launch vehicles because the United States does not currently have the launch capacity to keep up with demand from commercial satellites. Only a few weeks ago, 96 satellites from two American companies were launched on an Indian launch vehicle.

As constellations of hundreds or even thousands of communications and imagery satellites need to be launched, and new activities like human suborbital flight, commercial habitats, asteroid mining, lunar and Mars missions, and in-orbit satellite servicing begin to come on line, demand for launch will only increase.

Fortunately, new launch vehicles from companies such as ULA, SpaceX, OrbitalATK, Blue Origin, Virgin Galactic, RocketLab, and others should be coming on line in the next few years. This is great news and should provide much needed capacity to our domestic launch base. However, this will also cause regulatory, resourcing, and practical restrictions. Those new, next generation vehicles will have to be certified for flight. FAA will also have to approve launch licenses for all those individual missions. If launch cadences increase, coordination among users of spaceports (including NASA and the Air Force), use of ranges and ground infrastructure, and use of air space will have to become more efficient. This means FAA/AST will need a regulatory streamlining as well as more people to adjudicate licenses and other reviews. This means more resources are critical.

I have worked closely with your subcommittee over the past few years to plus up this office from the historical numbers Congress has appropriated, including last year when the Appropriations Committee reported an FY17 bill that matched the last President's Budget Request and provided \$19.8 million for FAA/AST. I would like to commend you all for your recognition of the important role space plays in our economy.

Unfortunately, since we are currently operating under a CR, the office has continued to be strained, and it is hampering the industry. As you begin working on FY 18 appropriations, I ask that you provide FAA/AST with a funding level that allows the office to both dig out from

under the backlog it is currently working under while also providing room to facilitate greater growth in the industry. To this end, I recommend the subcommittee appropriate \$23 million for FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation in Fiscal Year 2018. Anything less could lead to costly delays in the granting of launch licenses, which could have detrimental effects on this industry. Thank you.