Statement by Peter Davidson, Vice President of Global Government Affairs & Policy, Intelsat

before the United States House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

Legislative Hearing: "Liftoff: Unleashing Innovation in Satellite Communications Technologies."

February 8th, 2023

Executive Summary

- Intelsat has a rich history in the space and satellite industry beginning with President John F. Kennedy signing legislation, Communications Satellite Act, in 1962 creating Intelsat, up to our groundbreaking satellite life extension projects in 2020. Our DNA from the very beginning has been based upon the combination of collaboration and technological innovation to serve humankind. We have been good stewards of the space ecosystem for over half a decade and want to help preserve the space environment for generations to come.
- Intelsat believes it is important to ensure that legislation and regulation encourage competition, investment, and innovation. We are committed to the health and prosperity of all orbits and support the proper legal and regulatory frameworks to achieve this goal.
- We support the goals in the Satellite and Telecommunications Streamlining Act to eliminate the processing round system, expedite the FCC application process, set clear guidelines for technical compatibility among the various satellite systems, and address space sustainability.
- Intelsat also supports the goals of the LAUNCHES Act to further streamline the application process by eliminating unnecessary barriers to obtain spectrum licenses required to launch rockets from the U.S.
- The ALERT Parity Act requires the FCC to establish rules that enable the provision of emergency connectivity service in remote areas. Everyone deserves to have access to emergency services no matter where they live, and this legislation moves us closer to this goal.
- We also support the goal of the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act to provide connectivity to hard-to-reach rural areas. Much of the agricultural production in the U.S. takes place in very rural areas, some of which do not have access to terrestrial service. This bill, along with the upcoming farm bill can significantly advance this important initiative.
- The Secure Space Act is yet another example of how important satellite supply chain sustainability is, especially during these uncertain times. The intense global competition in space means protecting and promoting U.S. satellite operations. This will serve as an important foundation for continuing and accelerating innovation in our industry.
- In conclusion, we would like to reiterate four points:

    1. Continued access to spectrum, with regulatory certainty, is the cornerstone for a vibrant U.S. space economy.

    2. Space sustainability is fundamental to ensuring the continued growth in the space economy. A responsible and measured approach is key to ensuring that space remains viable for all orbits, LEO, MEO and GEO.

    3. Maximizing the efficient use of spectrum and space can only be achieved through a regulatory framework that requires transparency and information sharing among industry operators.

    4. Satellites are an excellent solution for broadband connectivity and disaster preparedness in hard-to-serve areas, including agricultural areas.

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Written Testimony

Chairwoman Rodgers, Ranking Member Pallone, Subcommittee Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Matsui, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. I am Peter Davidson, Vice President of Global Government Affairs and Policy at Intelsat.

I would like to thank you all for having me here to speak today about a critical foundation for education, health care, agriculture, entertainment – that is, ubiquitous communication access. I applaud the Subcommittee for focusing the first two hearings of this Congress on the importance of the space commerce sector. Specifically, today, our focus is on how to advance efficiency, investment, and innovation in the satellite sector. The title of this hearing, "Liftoff: Unleashing Innovation in Satellite Communications Technologies", recognizes that we are entering into the new space race that will determine how this technological innovation will translate into Americans' everyday lives.

I am proud to be testifying before this Committee representing a company that has played a pivotal role in the space and satellite industry. Our rich history originates from congressional action with President John F. Kennedy's signing of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962. Our DNA as an intergovernmental organization has, from the very beginning, been based upon service to mankind through collaboration and technological innovation. In 1965, we launched Early Bird, the world's first commercial communications satellite, which gave birth to the era of "live via satellite." In 1967 we carried the first-ever live international video broadcast when the Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and others around the world performed, "All You Need Is Love". In 1969 during the peak of the last space race, we broadcast the Moon landing and Neil Armstrong's historic walk. We took over 4 billion people to the Sydney Olympics in 2000. We continued our long list of "firsts" in 2020 when we and Northrup Grumman pioneered satellite life extension technology by successfully docking the mission extension vehicle with an active orbiting satellite with no service disruption. Intelsat has advanced the space industry through a

litany of historic milestones and achievements, and we continue to be at the forefront of satellite technology. We have been good stewards of the space environment for over half a decade and want to help preserve the space environment for generations to come.

Part of our responsibility as an industry leader is to enhance the space environment through the combined power of investment and innovation while ensuring the sustainability of that environment by augmenting the security and resiliency of the greater space ecosystem. As you well know, we are experiencing a time of unprecedented growth as satellites have demonstrated that they are able to revolutionize solutions to our everyday lives. While about 4,000 satellites have been launched in the last decade, it is estimated that this figure will more than quadruple in the next decade.

Intelsat applauds the Energy & Commerce Committee for taking timely action on these critical issues. Things like streamlining the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) application process, equitable access to spectrum, advancing space sustainability, and ensuring emergency communications while promoting U.S. leadership in international policy making bodies will all be critical in advancing the benefits of space commerce to Americans and people around the world.

We would like to thank the Committee Members and staff for their hard work over the past several months on the Satellite and Telecommunications Streamlining Act, or the SAT Act. These efforts have been quite timely given the intense activity in the space industry and ongoing regulatory proceedings. We at Intelsat support the goals of:

- Eliminating the processing round system.
- Expediting the FCC application process.
- Addressing sustainability by incorporating specific orbital debris measures.

- Setting clear guidelines for technical compatibility among the various satellite systems.

These changes will promote competition and innovation in space, ultimately to the benefit of American consumers, businesses, and advancing U.S. leadership in the space economy. As the SAT Act moves through the legislative process, Intelsat believes it is important to ensure that the legislation will encourage competition, investment and innovation rather than putting a finger on the scale for one business model or another. Intelsat is committed to the health and prosperity of all orbits, and with the proper legal and regulatory frameworks, this should not be difficult to achieve. Throughout our history we have primarily been a Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) provider (today Intelsat has 56 of our own satellites, and maintain and operate another 20 for others), but we are exploring opportunities in the Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) and have important partnerships with Low Earth Orbit (LEO) providers. We believe all of these orbits will increasingly be working together in integrated networks to deliver products and services, so U.S. and international policies should support the health of all orbits. Intelsat believes that all orbits should be treated fairly, and that regulation should be directed toward the highest areas of risk. For example, today we are seeing a rush to the LEO orbit, so when dealing with issues such as orbital debris, policy makers should first direct their attention to where the problems are most likely to arise, especially by implementing information sharing guidelines among stakeholders.

The LAUNCHES Act is another example of how Congress is looking to streamline the application process by eliminating unnecessary barriers that hamper the ability of private companies to obtain spectrum licenses required to launch rockets from the United States. Streamlining the application process will promote an essential part of our ever-evolving space economy. This will not only encourage competition, but by lowering costs and increasing launch availability, will also promote our goal of bridging the digital divide by providing connectivity to hard-to-reach and unconnected areas.

Advances in information technology and communications continue to spur economic growth around the world, but they also highlight a growing access disparity between the haves and have-nots. As many of you see in the districts you represent, there is a significant divide between the well-connected urban centers and off-the-grid rural areas. Closing this gap requires ubiquitous, broadband connectivity. But connecting these areas is no easy task. If we're going to enhance communications opportunities for consumers in these regions of the country, we need to streamline access for satellite operators to serve them adequately.

This is where advances in satellite technology can – and should – play a crucial role. Satellite is the only technology today that can provide truly global coverage (at Intelsat, our satellites cover 99% of the earth's populated regions). The perceptions of satellite as a cumbersome, costly alternative do not reflect today's dynamic sector that is transforming the communications landscape. We also applaud the Committee's consideration of the ALERT Parity Act, which requires the FCC to establish rules that enable the provision of emergency connectivity service in remote areas. Everyone deserves to have access to emergency services no matter where they live. For decades, Intelsat has been supporting emergency communications in natural disasters areas all over the world. We also support the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act's goal of providing connectivity to hard-to-reach rural areas. Of course, much of the agricultural production in the U.S. takes place in very rural areas, some of which do not have access to terrestrial service. Precision agriculture will be necessary for efficient production and ecologically smart farming, and satellites can provide a solution. This bill, along with the upcoming farm bill can significantly advance this important initiative.

Finally, I would like to highlight the Committee's goal of promoting the United States' leadership in space. The Secure Space Act is yet another example of how important satellite supply chain sustainability is, especially during these uncertain times. The intense global competition in space means protecting and promoting U.S. satellite operations will be an

important foundation for continuing and accelerating the innovations we see today in our industry. As was correctly pointed out during the hearing last week, our competitors are actively building up their emerging technologies and capabilities. As a leading provider of connectivity for U.S. national security through our Intelsat General unit, we believe now is the time to address this threat.

As the satellite industry rapidly evolves technologically, standards and regulatory frameworks have not kept pace. We applaud the Committee and the Subcommittee for turning its attention to help educate and lead that effort on the global stage. Fortunately, there have been some hopeful signs on this front. Recently, Doreen Bogdan-Martin was elected as the Secretary General of the ITU. The Secretary General will bring her decades of experience to help lead the ITU, particularly in this critical year leading up to the World Radio Conference in November. Moreover, regulators around the world – as evidenced by the recent Plenipotentiary Conference in Bucharest – have shown a renewed interest in promoting the space sector and in examining space sustainability policies. The unsuitability of existing regulatory frameworks jeopardizes the great potential of the satellite industry to serve society. With Doreen Bogdan Martin at the helm of the ITU and the attention of this Committee and the U.S. Government, we'll have we have a great opportunity to use our historic role in space to harness a vibrant and sustainable future.

While it is not directly addressed by the bills being considered today, you heard last week about the importance of spectrum to the satellite industry. Spectrum is the foundation of the space economy. The continued erosion of spectrum allocated to satellite services for decades now will significantly impede the ability of the U.S. to lead in this critical sector. This is why we are looking forward to working with you on these initiatives as we enter into the 118th Congress.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate four points:

1. Continued access to spectrum, with regulatory certainty, is the cornerstone for a vibrant U.S. space economy.

2. Space sustainability is fundamental to ensuring the continued growth in the space economy. A responsible and measured approach to utilizing space is key to ensuring that space remains viable for all orbits, LEO, MEO and GEO. And through collaboration, much like we do currently via our business partnerships within and across orbits, we can come up with a mutually beneficial solution through legislation, such as the SAT Act.

3. Maximizing the efficient use of spectrum and space can only be achieved through a regulatory framework that requires transparency and information sharing among industry operators.

4. Satellites are an excellent solution for disaster preparedness and broadband connectivity in hard to serve areas, including agricultural areas.

We at Intelsat will continue to be good stewards of space. We will continue to be strong proponents of collaboration, transparency, innovation, investment, and sustainability in space. The bills being considered today demonstrate that Congress will play a leading role in developing the right balance of policies – in the U.S. and around the world – to continue driving innovation and investment in the commercial space sector.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to speak with you today. I look forward to a robust discussion.