

OPENING STATEMENT
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House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Space
“Regulating Space: Innovation, Liberty, and International Obligations”
March 8, 2017

Good morning, and welcome to our witnesses.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on “Regulating Space”.

I’m excited about the possibilities for the commercial exploration and utilization of outer space.

The many proposals for new private sector space activities exemplify our nation’s capacity for innovation.

However, the pace of technology often moves faster than the policies that should guide its development and use.

And so we find ourselves at a key juncture as non-governmental actors and investors seek some policy clarity regarding their proposed activities in space.

We have a responsibility to provide them with as clear guidance as possible.

We also have a responsibility to uphold our international treaty obligations and, ultimately, to be good stewards of outer space.

Just the other day, I read in the Dallas Morning News an article titled “Orbiting junkyard begins to threaten space economy.”

What will it mean, for example, to have constellations involving hundreds of miniature satellites orbiting the Earth? How do they affect the potential for collisions in space, and what impact would an increasing chance of collisions have on future U.S. government and commercial space activities?

The legislative proposal put forth by the previous Administration included direction such that *“the Secretary of Transportation, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, is authorized to examine the planned and actual operational trajectories of space objects and to advise operators as appropriate to facilitate prevention of collisions.”*

While this proposal is one of a number of potential approaches, it or another measure will be needed to ensure that space remains a productive environment for scientific investigation, commerce, and governmental activities.

Mr. Chairman, I want our commercial space industry to grow and succeed. But determining what measures are needed to help ensure the safety and sustainability of space operations will require careful consideration.

I hope today's hearing is just the beginning of a series of discussions to closely examine the full spectrum of issues regarding commercial space missions that do not fall under existing regulatory authorities.

Our commercial sector, our nation's space program, and our future in space have much to gain from us taking the time to "get it right".

I look forward to our witness' testimony.

Thank you, and I yield back.