



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics Hearing:
Space Situational Awareness: Guiding the Transition to a Civil Capability
May 12, 2022

Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Beyer, for holding today's hearing on space situational awareness, and thank you to each of our witnesses for testifying today on this important topic.

Some of you may recall that this Subcommittee has previously held a hearing on the role of space situational awareness – or SSA – in the sustainability of the overall space environment. SSA involves collecting location data on space objects, processing that data to understand how those space objects move in space, and developing information to support spacecraft operators so they can avoid collisions in space.

As the amount of space debris and number of satellites orbiting the Earth have exponentially increased in recent years, SSA is critically important to maintaining space safety and ensuring that we continue to reap benefits on Earth from monitoring, operating, and living in space.

Currently the Department of Defense has the authority to publicly provide basic SSA information and notify space operators of potential collisions. Transitioning some of these services to a civilian authority is not a trivial task and there are important questions that must be answered.

We need to ensure that a clear path is in place.

The role of a strong SSA civil capability to our future in space is too important to risk limping along through a transition. We need a plan to do this responsibly.

The civil SSA system is the foundation on which we will build toward space traffic coordination. Our capability must consider international engagement to ensure space safety and sustainability in the years to come. The global community will not watch and wait for the United States to take action. The time is now.

I want to commend Chairman Beyer and Ranking Member Babin for holding today's hearing. This Subcommittee has been working hard on this topic and I look forward to the testimony and

discussion on the considerations for transitioning to a civil space situational awareness capability.

Thank you, and I yield back.