



Opening Statement of Chairman Mike Haridopolos

Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee Hearing
A Review of the Office of Space Commerce's Mission Authorization Proposal
Wednesday, July 15, 2026

We can't be number one on Earth if we are number two in space. Under the bold leadership of President Trump and Administrator Jared Isaacman, NASA is demonstrating that America belongs at the top.

This year, we took a major step forward with the successful Artemis 2 mission, which carried astronauts around the Moon for the first time since 1972. We also have a thriving commercial space sector and a dynamic ecosystem that is powering every corner of the space economy. In Florida alone, the space and aerospace industry now supports nearly 150,000 private sector jobs, more than five times the roughly 30,000 jobs it supported just 15 years ago.

Over the past 5 years, we have also seen the number of launches grow from 54 in 2021, including 26 from Florida, to 199 in 2025—with more than half originating from Florida. As Subcommittee Chairman, I am committed to ensuring America's commercial space sector has the freedom to innovate and lead, while the federal government protects public safety and upholds our international obligations.

Today, we will review the Department of Commerce's proposal for a mission authorization framework. Mission authorization is the process by which the U.S. government reviews and oversees commercial space activities.

This proposal would help the United States meet its obligations under Article 6 of the Outer Space Treaty, which requires governments around the world to authorize and continually supervise nongovernmental space activities.

Currently, the United States has clear regulatory frameworks for activities like launch and reentry, the use of spectrum, and remote sensing of the Earth. But as our commercial sector pushes the boundaries of what is possible in space, we must provide the regulatory certainty that companies need. Failing to do so risks slowing investment, stifling innovation, and weakening America's leadership in space.

The prior Administration proposed a complex approach, which created duplicative authorities across agencies and would have increased red tape for our commercial space sector. That's why President Trump issued several executive orders to ensure the United States dominates across all aspects of space. One order directed the Department of Commerce to develop an approach for authorizing novel space activities.

Several aspects of this proposal align with legislation considered by this Committee last Congress, the Commercial Space Act of 2023, sponsored by our Chairman, Dr. Babin, which offers a common-sense path forward. Today, we will review the Office of Space Commerce's proposal in full with our witness.

I thank Mr. Taylor Jordan, director of the Office of Space Commerce, for joining us today. And I look forward to a productive discussion about how Congress can boost President Trump and NASA's mission to ensure the United States remains the world leader in commercial space.