



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

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Space Subcommittee Hearing:

“A Review of the Office of Space Commerce’s Mission Authorization Proposal”

July 15, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Haridopolos, for holding this hearing, and thank you to Mr. Jordan for appearing before us today.

The United States has an international obligation under the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 to authorize and supervise non-governmental activities in space conducted by U.S. individuals or entities. Currently, the U.S. policy framework for authorizing and supervising space activities pertains only to commercial launch and reentry, commercial space-based remote sensing, and radiofrequency communications. Yet, we know that much more is on the horizon, or even happening already. It seems like almost every day we are reading about a new planned commercial space technology or service—some more far-fetched than others.

Just last week, the Federal Communications Commission—the FCC—approved a license for a space activity that will, by design, reflect sunlight back and alter the physical conditions on Earth. In a rare admission, the FCC said that addressing any concerns related to the satellite’s purpose was outside of their jurisdiction. That admission illustrates, in part, why we are here today. No federal agency has statutory authority to oversee novel space missions.

How we, in Congress, consider which agency should have such statutory authority to ensure novel space activities align with our international Treaty obligations is not just an interesting policy question. There are real risks—including potential financial liability—for the U.S. taxpayer. Companies and investors also need predictability in the regulatory landscape as they weigh business decisions.

We have worked on this topic in multiple Congresses and have seen *many* proposals over the years from the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch. We have not yet landed on a solution—and we need to.

I believe that we ought to advance a commercial space industry that contributes to the public good and a strong economy. Clarity about who regulates specific activities is needed. I also believe that any solution must allow for some commonsense rules for in-space operations to address international obligations, national security, foreign policy, public health and safety, and national interests—like maintaining a safe and accessible space environment and not undermining our own scientific capabilities on the ground and in space.

In that regard, Mr. Chairman, I would urge that we also consider the expertise and equities of other relevant agencies such as Department of Defense, Federal Aviation Administration, and NASA.

I also want to highlight one of the Office of Space Commerce's other activities that is of immense importance: standing up a civil space situational awareness capability to monitor satellites and space debris and notify operators of potential collisions. This effort, called Traffic Coordination System for Space, or TraCSS, has reached a pilot phase.

Yet, inexplicably, the Administration's fiscal year 2027 budget request does not propose funding to continue the TraCSS project. Do we not need to worry about potential collisions in space, especially as orbits become increasingly congested?

Despite the importance of TraCSS and a global space economy in the hundreds of billions of dollars, OMB requested just \$11 million for the Office of Space Commerce for fiscal year 2027, an 80% cut from the fiscal year 2026 appropriation. Should we conclude from this budget request that the Administration does not prioritize ensuring that the United States remains the world leader in commercial space. Nor is it clear to me how the Office of Space Commerce

would be able to take on the added responsibilities we are to hear about today at that funding level.

Well, we have a lot to discuss, and I look forward to our witness' testimony.

Thank you again, and I yield back.