

June 8, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chair, House Committee on Science,
Space & Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Science, Space & Technology
394 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson:

We are writing to convey our strong support for the “American Space Commerce Free Enterprise Act of 2017” (ASCFEA), and our organizations want to commend all the parties involved in the development of the bill.

The existing status quo is no longer fit for the modern space industry. New companies looking to compete in the large remote sensing market struggle with cumbersome regulations that are out of date and place an undue barrier to entry. The lack of a single, well-defined body of authority responsible for certification, authorization, and supervision of non-governmental space activities creates undue complexity. With this challenging regulatory environment and lack of clear lines of authority, our nation’s emerging newspace industry is disadvantaged in the global competitive landscape.

Given that enabling both space development and space settlement are vital to the strategic future of the United States, we need a solution that ensures we will not only continue to meet our obligations under the Outer Space Treaty, but also encourages and enables new non-governmental space activities to be pursued. Therefore, we are glad to see long-standing issues related to commercial remote sensing licenses are being addressed, and that a transparent, timely, and appealing regulatory process would be available for new non-traditional space activities upon passage of this bill.

We want to thank the Chairman Smith, Chairman Babin, and Congressman Bridenstine, and their staffs, for all the work that went into this bill. Finally, we want to encourage all parties to remember that the surest way to derive benefits from space is by positioning the United States to enable space development and space settlement on issues such as these, and we look forward to working with you and your offices on these and other matters related to space.

Sincerely,

Andrew Newman,
Chairman, Students for the Exploration and Development of Space

Josh Guild
Interim Executive Director, Space Frontier Foundation