



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

For Immediate Release
June 27, 2018

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Statement from Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)

Markup of H.R. 6226

Chairman Smith: The world is on the cusp of an amazing revolution in space. Today, there are eleven hundred active satellites in orbit. In a few years, there will be tens of thousands. And, a variety of new and dynamic spacecraft will go into operation, such as private space stations, on-orbit repair and refueling satellites and celestial resource prospectors.

With this great increase in activity, it is time for our nation to lead the world by establishing a space traffic management framework that will ensure a safe operating environment in outer space.

The American Space SAFE Management Act addresses this timely and important challenge facing spacefaring nations. It does so by addressing science and technology, space situational awareness, and space traffic management.

First, this act directs the administration to coordinate its Federal research and development investments in space traffic management. It also directs the administration to work collaboratively with the private sector. Finally, it establishes a NASA Center of Excellence that will develop, lead and promote research in space traffic management.

Second, this act creates a civil space situational awareness (SSA) program within the Department of Commerce. Commerce will provide a basic level of SSA information and services, free of charge, to the public. While the Department of Defense retains the tracking sources currently used to compile the catalog of space objects, Commerce will augment that with data from other sources, including the private sector and foreign partners.

Many stakeholders want access not only to SSA services but also to the underlying data. So this act establishes a space situational awareness testbed that complements the broader SSA program. This testbed will allow the public to access certain SSA data subject to relevant national security and foreign policy concerns.

Third, a space traffic management framework will be established. This framework will be built on top-down voluntary guidelines developed by the government, bottom-up standards developed by industry and a pilot space traffic coordination program.

The pilot program will allow the government and stakeholders to experiment and learn more about the best ways to manage space traffic. This framework is a common-sense first step in what will be a long-term process of developing a comprehensive space traffic management framework.

The American Space SAFE Management Act is the culmination of years of work that this committee has undertaken. Over four years ago, this committee held its first of several hearings on space traffic management followed by many hearings, roundtable events and meetings with stakeholders.

The Space SAFE Management Act has the full support of the president, vice-president, the National Space Council, and the Secretaries of Defense, Transportation and Commerce.

Original co-sponsors include Space Subcommittee Chairman Brian Babin, Rep. Bera, Rep. Lucas, Rep. Perlmutter and Rep. Rohrabacher. Thanks go to the committee members and staff for developing this history-making, common sense, bipartisan bill.

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