

November 14, 2023



**SPACE FRONTIER
FOUNDATION**

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman, House Committee on Science, Space,
and Tech.
United States House of Representatives
2405 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member, House Committee on Science,
Space, and Tech.
United States House of Representatives
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Babin
Chairman, Space and Aeronautics,
House Committee on Science, Space, and Tech.
United States House of Representatives
2236 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eric Sorensen
Ranking Member, Space and Aeronautics,
House Committee on Science, Space, and Tech.
United States House of Representatives
1205 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

We are writing to you in support of H.R. 6131, The Commercial Space Act of 2023.

The economic development of outer space is just beginning. While humanity already depends on GPS, remote sensing, weather satellites, and communication satellites for its daily needs, as we extend further into the cosmos with activities like private space stations, space solar power, and space mining, there is a desperate need for ensuring clear, concise, and limited oversight. In that context, we applaud the work that the Chairmen and their staff did in developing H.R. 6131. We strongly support the passage of the bill.

Activities in space are currently overseen by various agencies: FCC, FAA/AST, OSC, and NOAA. This mix of Agencies creates significant delays and uncertainty for commercial companies. There is broad consensus that a single agency should have the *limited* authority necessary to ensure compliance with international treaties and US laws. There is *no* broad consensus as to how far beyond strict treaty compliance and existing US law should a solution to the regulatory clarity problem reach.

This fundamental question of regulatory scope has hindered many new ideas for space development, such as space solar power, private space stations, and space mining. These proposals (sometimes referred to as “novel space activities”) will form the backbone of our future in space, but only if we have clear oversight authority that is grounded in concrete evidence and widespread consensus. This bill ensures that, when regulations are necessary, they are targeted, proportional, and developed through the democratic process, not left to the discretion of individual agencies or obscured in the complexities of interagency processes.

This bill also brings these activities under the Department of Commerce’s Office of Space Commerce which was formed with a “dual mandate” of regulating as well as promoting the space industry. A dual mandate ensures that all regulations are weighed against the ability of the industry to be economically viable. No other entity is structured this way other than the Office of Space Commerce. The bill also addresses orbital debris mitigation by requiring entities to have and publish a plan for how they will

mitigate space debris and preserve the space environment. In short, this bill allows new industries to grow in a manner that provides necessary flexibility.

The Foundation also supports two amendments that are being offered for this bill. The first is sponsored by Representative Mullin and requires a report by the Office of Space Commerce about the potential of Space-based Solar Power. Space-based Solar Power has the potential to provide substantial energy needed for our society in a manner that is both growth-enabling and environmentally friendly and also independent of foreign adversaries. The second is sponsored by Representative Garcia and proposes many improvements to FAA/AST. These improvements will ensure that industry can provide the launch capabilities that the nation needs.

One item we continually highlight in our meetings and discussions is that future space races will be won or lost based on who can deliver the most economic value from space to the greatest number of people. This bill and these amendments go a long way in enabling this idea.

Again, we thank you for your time, and we hope to see the speedy passage of this bill.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Mahoney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sean Mahoney

Executive Director and Chairman of the Board