



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

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Space & Aeronautics Subcommittee Hearing:

Risks and Rewards:

Encouraging Commercial Space Innovation While Maintaining Public Safety

September 10, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Babin and Ranking Member Sorensen, for holding today's hearing on encouraging commercial space innovation while maintaining public safety. I also want to welcome our panel of distinguished witnesses. Thank you for being here.

The U.S. commercial space industry is vibrant and growing. This is good for our economy, and it is good for all of us who benefit from the many applications of space technologies and capabilities. The launch and reentry industry is a pillar of not only our commercial space industry, but also our civil and national security space programs. It is literally what gets us there.

Four years ago, the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation issued new regulations intended to streamline the process of getting a launch or reentry license and enable greater innovation, flexibility, and efficiency. The implementation of these regulations, and getting it right, is one of the most pressing issues for the commercial space industry today. I'm pleased we are discussing this important topic. We need a modern, commonplace regulatory system that can accommodate and enable the growing industry and its increasing pace of activity.

It's no surprise that the cadence and complexity of launch operations and systems is adding significant strain to the system. In many ways, this is a good problem to have, if we can ensure the necessary support and resources are available to manage it.

Congress, on a bipartisan basis, recognizes the need to better equip the FAA to support a growing commercial space industry. Even amidst a constrained budget environment, FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation has seen budget increases in recent years. More increases are needed, in large part to allow FAA to hire the right people to handle the increasing workload.

As is so often the case, we are asking an agency to do a lot with a limited budget.

I suspect, however, that budget increases alone are not enough to get us where we need to be. To that end, I am eager to hear today from our witnesses about concrete, actionable solutions to ensure that the FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation can more efficiently and

effectively carry out its mission to regulate commercial space launch and reentry consistent with the public health and safety, safety of property, national security, and foreign policy interests of the United States.

I look forward to the testimony today. Thank you, and I yield back.