

OPENING STATEMENT  
**Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
Subcommittee on Space  
*“Commercial Remote Sensing: Facilitating Innovation and Leadership”*  
September 7, 2016

Thank you Chairman Babin for holding this hearing, and thank you to our panel of witnesses for being here this afternoon.

Enabled by years of federal investment, the commercial remote sensing industry has made significant progress. In addition to selling high-resolution imagery to government and commercial customers, a number of companies are proposing new approaches to remote sensing, including using constellations of smaller satellites to provide imagery more frequently.

As many of the Members of this Subcommittee know, the licensing of operations of private space-based remote sensing systems falls within the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce, namely NOAA’s Assistant Administrator for Satellite and Information Services’ Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs unit.

Industry growth has impacted the licensing workload of that unit. For example, while 26 licenses were issued from Fiscal Year 1996 to Fiscal Year 2010, 75 licenses were issued from Fiscal Year 2010 to Fiscal Year 2015. And just within Fiscal Year 2015, 33 applications for licenses were filed with the unit.

With this backdrop, I look forward to hearing from our panel of witnesses on ways in which NOAA’s regulatory function can be improved in the face of evolving technology and projected operational advancements. In particular, I would like to know whether there is a need to update NOAA’s licensing regulations and whether NOAA operations can be streamlined, for example, in dealing with the increasing number of cubesats requesting a license.

I would also be interested in hearing whether new regulations can be developed without unduly limiting the promise of innovative commercial remote sensing technologies while at the same time addressing any legitimate concerns of the intelligence and national security communities.

Chairman Babin, today’s hearing addresses an important topic.

In addition to today’s testimony, I urge you to invite NOAA representatives to a future hearing to lay out the challenges they face and actions they plan to take to address them.

I yield back.