

STATEMENT ON H.R. 1508

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

H.R. 1508, the “*Space Resource Exploration and Utilization Act of 2015*”
Full Committee Markup

May 13, 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairman. As you know, I plan to offer an amendment in the nature of a substitute to the bill before us, and so I will discuss my concerns with this legislation in more depth at that time. As a result, I will confine my opening remarks to just a few main points.

First, despite my deep concerns with the legislation as drafted, I want to commend Mr. Posey and Mr. Kilmer for introducing it and getting the discussion started on the issues raised by it. And those issues are complex, including questions related to our international treaty obligations. It is clear that different approaches to addressing those issues can have significant impacts down the road. We need to get this right.

Space resource utilization is a topic that may not be as urgent as many of the other matters this Committee should be concerned with, but it is not silly either. I do not doubt that space resource utilization can become a reality at some point in the future, and it behooves us to spend the time to figure out the appropriate policy framework in advance.

That is why I am so disappointed that we are rushing this bill to full committee markup today. We have had no hearings or roundtables devoted to the issues raised by this bill this Congress. Nor have we had a subcommittee markup where these issues could receive an airing.

The only relevant hearing the Committee has held on the subject was on a predecessor bill from last Congress. During that hearing a well known space law expert testified that there were some significant regulatory and legal challenges left unaddressed in the proposed legislation. That same expert has written a letter to the Committee this week, expressing her concerns about the bill before us today, and I ask that be placed into the record.

As a result, I will be offering an amendment that will help us start to get the information we will need to develop thoughtful legislation that can enable space resource utilization to become a reality. Failing its adoption, I will be compelled to oppose this bill.

With that, I yield back.