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7 June 2017

The Honorable Lamar Smith  
Chair, House Committee on Science,  
Space & Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Science, Space & Technology  
394 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson:

I am writing on behalf of the 70+ companies and organization in strong support of the Committee on Science, Space and Technology's markup of the American Space Commerce Free Enterprise Act (ASCFEA), as introduced by Chairman Smith, Chairman Babin, and Representative Bridenstine. This legislation clearly reflects the Committee's continued bipartisan support for America's commercial space industry, and we endorse it being reported favorably to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

Specifically, the member companies and institutions of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation are in strong agreement with all of the goals and most of the key elements of your legislation:

- Significant reform of the Commerce Department's obsolete, burdensome, and dysfunctional regime for licensing commercial remote sensing satellites is especially welcome. While the hardworking staff of the Office of Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs inside NOAA do their best to administer an out-of-date law and unworkable regulations, this legislation's wholesale revision of current law and elevating this responsibility up to a revitalized Office of Space Commerce in the Office of the Secretary will help the U.S. remote sensing industry realize its full job-creating potential.
- ASCFEA's other goal is to formally address the U.S. government's obligations under Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty to authorize and supervise "non-traditional" commercial space activities. This legislation creates a clear, objective, transparent, timely and appealable process for American companies to pursue innovative space goods and services beyond telecommunications, remote sensing, and space transportation.

- CSF commends the Committee’s inclusion of a specific funding authorization for the Office of Space Commerce to handle this expanded responsibility, because inadequate funding and staffing of other federal space regulatory functions (e.g. FAA/AST and NOAA/OCRSRA) has been a continuing challenge to industry advancement and growth.
- CSF supports the creation of a new Private Space Activity Advisory Committee that will help the Secretary of Commerce and a new Assistant Secretary for Commercial Space carry out their responsibilities under this legislation and report to Congress annually on progress and issues relating to U.S. private sector space activities and the federal government’s authorization and supervision thereof. CSF will actively help Congress and the Department fully utilize this external review mechanism to improve federal oversight and streamlined regulation of private sector space activity.

CSF and its members will continue to engage with the Committee, the rest of Congress, and other federal stakeholders as this bill continues on the legislative process. In this manner we would like to highlight two remaining topics for which we would like to work with the Committee and Congress to resolve:

- There is a strong consensus among the membership that the use and definition of “certification” to describe the approval of a new commercial space activity is problematic, because it has many other associations in the aerospace industry which are not appropriate for the “light touch” regime you are pursuing.
- The choice of the Department of Commerce, specifically the Office of Space Commerce, as the location of the new authorization and supervision responsibility under Section 3 of the bill.

Again, thanks to you, Chairman Babin, Representative Bridenstine, and all of your staffs for developing this important legislation, and for giving the members of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation continuing opportunities to discuss, ask questions, and provide feedback on the key aspects of the bill. We commend your continuing leadership and support for the U.S. commercial space industry, and wish you a successful markup tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Eric W. Stallmer  
President  
Commercial Spaceflight Federation

CC:

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy

The Honorable Brian Babin

The Honorable Jim Bridenstine

The Honorable Ami Bera

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter

The Honorable Derek Kilmer