



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

For Immediate Release
June 22, 2018

Media Contact: Bridget Dunn
(202) 225-6371

Statement by Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)

Space Situational Awareness: Whole of Government Perspectives on Roles and Responsibilities

Chairman Smith: Mr. Chairman, let me start by thanking my Armed Services Committee colleagues, Chairman Mac Thornberry, Ranking Member Adam Smith, Chairman Mike Rogers and Ranking Member Jim Cooper for collaborating on this joint hearing.

Space situational awareness has dramatic civil, commercial and national security implications. NASA, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Defense and the private sector all play important.

The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee has held a number of hearings on this topic, with testimony provided by civil, commercial and national security experts.

But today is the first time our two committees have jointly held a hearing on this crucial topic. And our timing couldn't be better.

Earlier this week, President Trump presented and signed National Space Policy Directive 3 at a National Space Council ceremony at the White House. This Directive establishes new national policy for space situational awareness and space traffic management.

The President's proposal for the Department of Commerce to take the lead in space situational awareness and space traffic management is good policy. The department's newly expanded space team and commercial space-related functions present the ideal environment for this responsibility. Unlike in past generations, activity in space is becoming largely commercial. Commerce is uniquely positioned to ensure that innovation, investment and private sector leadership will have a prominent place in any future space traffic management framework.

Granting the Department of Commerce this authority is consistent with the policy of the American Space Commerce Free Enterprise Act, which passed the House by a voice vote this April. It also complements regulatory responsibilities assigned to the Commerce Department under National Space Policy Directive 2.

I look forward to Secretary Ross's testimony this morning to learn more details about how the Department of Commerce will execute this responsibility.

I recognize that transitioning the DOD responsibilities to Commerce will impact government and non-governmental customers of DOD's existing service. This is why it is critical that the

administration take all necessary actions to ensure that current levels of services are, at a minimum, maintained during the transition.

No discussion of America's future in space is complete without including NASA. NASA has accumulated vast technical, engineering and scientific expertise relevant to space situational awareness. NASA's expertise should be leveraged, on a reimbursable basis, to support the Department of Commerce. It will take a cooperative effort to meet the challenges and ensure American leadership in this field. Our former colleague and American Space Commerce bill co-author, now NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine, will make this happen I have no doubt. Welcome Jim.

Finally, let me highlight the major developments occurring in the private sector. In the past, applied space situational science and technology development was solely the responsibility of the government and the national security industrial base. No longer. Today, the private sector is conducting independent research and developing new technologies to address civilian needs. We should foster such research and development and support the transition of private innovation to the marketplace.

I thank our witnesses for appearing today and look forward to their testimony.

###