

Akin™

Space Law, Regulation and Policy Update

January 24, 2025

[Subscribe](#) | [Share](#)   

Good Afternoon!

Forget the past two weeks, it's been a busy week in the business of space. Since President Trump's inauguration, Washington has been busy shuffling the deck on U.S. space leadership and priorities. Outside Washington, the Nordics are all-in on U.S. space cooperation and McKinsey says the business of space is about to get a whole lot bigger.

All this and more in this week's edition of Akin's Space Law, Regulation and Policy newsletter.

Akin Spotlight

Akin's [Trump Executive Order Tracker](#) provides a high-level overview of executive orders published by the new administration. These orders cut across dozens of industries and topics. The Tracker is updated as orders and Akin's in-depth analysis of specific orders are published.

Please visit Akin's [Trump Executive Order Overview](#) to view a matrix of the orders.

On The Hill

Articles and Quotes

Isaacman Wins Support, But Also Criticism from Republicans (Space Policy Online)

As Jared Isaacman, President Trump's nominee for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Administrator, awaits the scheduling of his Senate confirmation hearing, he is confronted with mixed messaging from Republicans. Isaacman has received endorsements from veterans of Republican space circles like Newt Gingrich, former House Speaker and known space proponent, and Jim Bridenstine, NASA Administrator during Trump's first term. But other party members have raised concerns over his prior Democratic contributions and the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies of Shift4, Isaacman's payment processing company.

NASA Presses on With Artemis as Questions Swirl About the Future (Space

Policy Online)

On January 23, NASA awarded a series of contracts for projects supporting its Artemis program, marking that the agency intends to push the program forward as debate heightens around lunar and Martian exploration. Both President Trump and Elon Musk have emerged as advocates of a “Mars-first” strategy, bypassing human lunar exploration in favor of going straight to Mars, a policy that would jeopardize the future of Artemis. Some members of Congress and others in the space policy field have voiced uncertainty in regard to the proposal, citing existing contracts, commitments to constituencies, and scientific practicality. Without official guidance from the Trump Administration or appropriations from Congress, the winner of the Moon/Mars debate remains to be determined.

Introduced Legislation & Legislative Updates

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology leadership, Chair Brian Babin (R-TX) and Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), have released [Republican](#) and [Democrat](#) Committee rosters for the 119th Congress.

Please find our Space Legislation Tracker [here](#).

Recent and Upcoming Congressional Hearings

(Jan 24 - Feb 7, 2025)

On Monday, January 20, the Senate unanimously confirmed Marco Rubio as Secretary of State, marking the first Senate confirmation of a cabinet position for the Trump-Vance administration.

Also on Monday, January 20, the Senate Armed Services Committee voted to advance the nomination of Pete Hegseth for Secretary of Defense to the Senate floor.

The Senate Armed Services Committee will hold a [hearing](#) on January 28, 2025, at 9:30 AM “to examine defense innovation and acquisition reform.”

In the White House/Executive Branch



Articles and Quotes

Second Trump Administration Begins with Confusion on Acting Nasa Leadership (SpaceNews)

On Monday, January 20, as President Trump gave his inaugural address, the NASA website was updated to reflect Jim Free, the current Associate Administrator of the agency, as the new Acting Administrator. The change came after the departure of former Administrator Bill Nelson at the conclusion of the Biden administration. Yet in a [press release](#) published soon after Trump took office, the administration announced that Kennedy Space Center director Janet Petro will serve as Acting Administrator. Petro is now the Acting Administrator while nominee Jared Isaacman awaits confirmation proceedings before the Senate Commerce Committee.

Trump Fully Endorses Astronauts on Mars in Inaugural Address (Space Policy Online)

During his inaugural address, President Trump emphasized a commitment to sending American astronauts to Mars, reaffirming his support for human exploration beyond the Moon. He highlighted Mars as a key goal, while leaving out any mention of lunar exploration. While figures close to the President have previously called the Moon “a distraction,” funding challenges persist as Congress debates the roles of lunar and Martian exploration in maintaining U.S. space leadership.

Trump Picks NRO Official Troy Meink as Next Air Force Secretary (Breaking Defense)

President Trump has nominated Troy Meink, the Principal Deputy Director of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), as the next Air Force Secretary. Meink’s nomination suggests an upcoming focus on space programs, given his prior experience with the Space Force and joint space domain awareness. If confirmed, he would oversee the Air Force, Space Force and space spending priorities, including commercial contracts. Meink formerly served as President Obama’s Air Force Under Secretary.

Executive Order Calls for Cybersecurity Review of Civil Space Systems (SpaceNews)

As one of his final actions in the Oval Office, former President Joe Biden signed an **executive order** seeking to strengthen federal cybersecurity, including that of federal space systems. The order, which has not yet been revoked by President Trump, calls for a review of civilian government ground systems and space system contracting criteria. The order cites rising cyber threats to U.S. space assets, potentially impacting national security and global commerce, as justification.

SDA Director Suspended Pending Investigation (Air and Space Forces)

The Department of the Air Force has announced that Derek Tourner, Director of the Space Development Agency (SDA), has been placed on administrative leave pending the results of an undisclosed investigation. Tourner, SDA’s first permanent Director, is to be temporarily replaced by Space Systems Command (SSC) head Lt. Gen. Philip Garrant. Founded in 2019 during the first Trump administration, the SDA aims to accelerate the acquisition of certain space capabilities, namely satellites, through commercial partnerships.

Space: The \$1.8 Trillion Opportunity for Global Economic Growth (McKinsey & Company)

Consulting giant McKinsey, alongside the World Economic Forum, is estimating that the global space economy will be worth \$1.8 trillion by 2035, a trend driven by projected increasing needs for commercial satellite services and the expected growth of AI capabilities. Similarly, the firm projects that applications for launchers, satellites and other space capabilities will grow at a rate quicker than the global nominal GDP over the next decade. The \$1.8 trillion figure, adjusted for inflation, would shatter the 2023 space economy valuation of \$630 billion.

Federal Agency Space News

Defense Department

Defense Department Bids Farewell to Outgoing Commander in Chief (January 16, 2025)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Suni Williams Conducts Spacewalk (January 21, 2025)

[NASA Scientists, Engineers Receive Presidential Early Career Awards](#) (January 17, 2025)

[NASA Names David Korth as Deputy, Safety and Mission Assurance Directorate](#) (January 16, 2025)

[NASA Names Mary Beth Schwartz as Director, Center Operations Directorate](#) (January 16, 2025)

[ARMD Solicitations \(USRC Proposal Updates\)](#) (January 16, 2025)

[NASA Seeks Proposals for Space Biology and Physical Sciences Research](#) (January 15, 2025)

[NASA Deputy Administrator to Receive 2025 National Space Award](#) (January 14, 2025)

U.S. Space Force

[VSBF Achieves Historic Milestone With 51 Launches in 2024](#) (January 21, 2025)

[Space Force Year in Review: 2024](#) (January 16, 2025)

[New Glenn Launch Signals New Era for Space Launch Complex 36](#) (January 16, 2025)

[Kendall Offers Vision for the Air Force, Space Force of 2050](#) (January 14, 2025)

International

Articles & Quotes

[US and Norway Sign Technology Safeguards Agreement for Launches from Andøya](#) (*SpaceNews*)

On January 16, the U.S. and Norway signed the Agreement on Technology Safeguards Associated with U.S. Participation in Space Launches from Norway (TSA). The TSA permits the operation of U.S. space assets from Andøya Spaceport, a launch facility located on an island just above the Arctic Circle. The agreement marks a trend of space export and operation expansion for the U.S., which has signed similar agreements with the United Kingdom and New Zealand in the past two years.

[Finland Joins the Artemis Accords](#) (*Payload*)

On January 21, Finland became the 53rd signatory of the Artemis Accords, as announced by NASA. Finnish officials stated that the nation's signing marks a commitment to investments in space activities, which aligns with a late 2024 Finnish resolution citing the importance of space capabilities for defense purposes and climate monitoring.

Check out below for comment opportunities, requests for proposals, notices of proposed rulemaking and a look at the week ahead in space events:

Comment Opportunities (RFIs)

Sensor Subsystem Assembly (SSA)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 31, 2025

Applying NASA Capabilities to Address Water Management Needs in the Missouri River Basin to Support Water Resources Management

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Feb 14, 2025

Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

Human Health and Performance Contract 2 (HHPC2)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 30, 2025

Mechanical and Composite Hardware Fabrication Support Services 2 (MCHFSS 2)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Jan 30, 2025

Amendment 11-SEWP VI Final RFP & Batch 9 Q&A (6th Generation of Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurements)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Feb 19, 2025

Notices of Proposed Rulemakings (NPRMs)

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Controlled Unclassified Information

Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Mar 17, 2025

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Preventing Organizational Conflicts of Interest in Federal Acquisition

Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Mar 17, 2025

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Small Business Participation on Certain Multiple-Award Contracts

Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Mar 17, 2025

Federal Acquisition Regulation: Protests of Orders Under Certain Multiple-Award Contracts

Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Close Date: Mar 17, 2025

Upcoming Space Events

Ilan Ramon International Space Conference

Israel Space Agency
January 27, 2025

Commercial Space Week

SpaceCom
January 27-30, 2025

17th European Space Conference

Business Bridge Europe
January 28-29, 2025

Interagency Astronomy and Astrophysics Advisory Committee

NSF, NASA, DOE
January 30-31, 2025

SmallSat Symposium 2025

SatNews
February 4-6, 2025

Mercury Exploration Assessment Group

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
February 4-6, 2025

Exploring the Potential of Lunar Helium-3 Mining

Beyond Earth Institute
February 6, 2025

Defense and Intelligence Space Conference

National Security Space Association
February 10-12, 2025

Commercial Space Conference

FAA-AST, Commercial Space Federation
February 12, 2025

The Legal and Operation Challenges of Space Flight

Cleveland State Law Global Space Law Center
February 13, 2025

Business of Space Conference

University of Alabama Huntsville
February 23-25, 2025

Global Space Technology Convention and Exhibition

Singapore Space and Technology Ltd
February 26-27, 2025

AscendXTexas

AIAA
February 26-27, 2025

IEEE Aerospace Conference

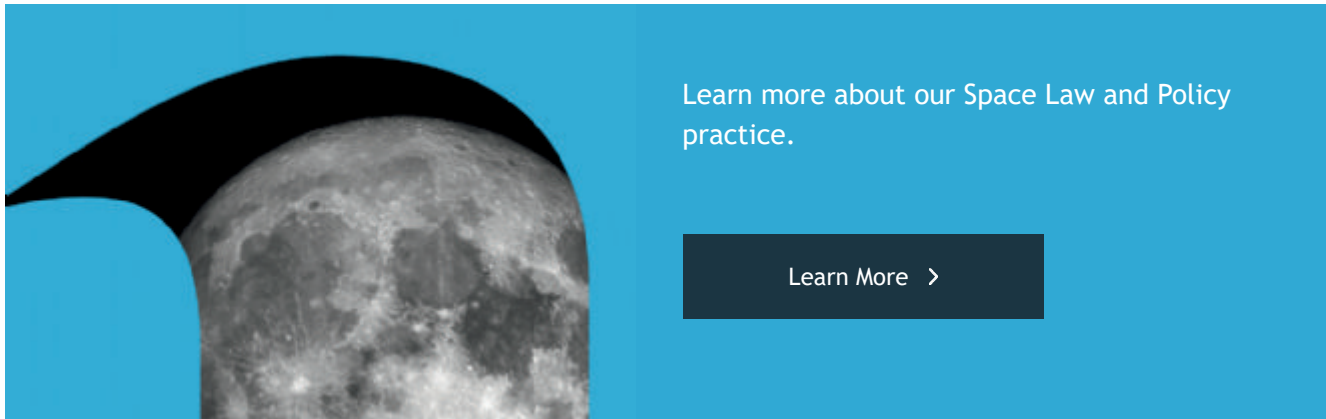
IEEE, AIAA
March 1-8, 2025

Farnborough International Space Show

Farnborough International
March 19-20, 2025

Space Beach Law Lab

Space Beach Law Lab
March 25-27, 2025



Learn more about our Space Law and Policy practice.

[Learn More >](#)

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

Authors



Michael C. Mineiro
Space Policy & Regulation
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4068



Thomas J. McCarthy
International Trade
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4047



Carlos M. Bermudez
Corporate
[Email](#)
+1 310.728.3320



Jennifer L. Richter
Telecom, Media & Technology
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4524



Hans C. Rickhoff
Lobbying & Public Policy
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4145



Steve A. Rowings
Telecom, Media & Technology
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4412



Marta A. Thompson
Government Contracts
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4055



Lamar Smith
Lobbying & Public Policy
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4031

Contributors



Chase Hamilton
International Trade
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4018

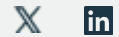


Sharanya Sriram
Telecom, Media & Technology
[Email](#)
+1 202.887.4278



Brandon Brodwater
Lobbying & Public Policy
[Email](#)
+1 202.416.5127

akingump.com



© 2025 Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP. All rights reserved. Attorney advertising. This document is distributed for informational use only; it does not constitute legal advice and should not be used as such. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. Receipt of this information does not create an attorney-client relationship. Do not act upon this information without seeking professional counsel. All content is presented by Akin and cannot be copied or rebroadcasted without express written consent. Akin is the practicing name of Akin Gump LLP, a New York limited liability partnership authorized and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority under number 267321. A list of the partners is available for inspection at Eighth Floor, Ten Bishops Square, London E1 6EG. For more information about Akin Gump LLP, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP and other associated entities under which the Akin network operates worldwide, please see our [Legal Notices](#) page.

[Update Your Preferences](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Forward to a Friend](#) | [Legal Notices](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

This email was sent by: 2001 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006-1037