



May 12, 2015

Open Letter to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology:

NSS urges passage of the “Spurring Private Aerospace Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship Act of 2015” (SPACE Act of 2015)

The Washington DC-based National Space Society (NSS) has been a consistent supporter of the rapidly expanding commercial space sector and the ISS. NSS thanks the House leadership, and in particular Representatives McCarthy, Smith, and Palazzo of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology for developing a strong pro-commercial space bill. NSS urges that the House approve the SPACE Act of 2015 with at least the following provisions, all of which are critical to the future growth of this sector:

- Extension of the launch liability coverage period from 2016 to 2023.
- Amends current law to allow commercial space launch companies to both test new vehicles and operate existing vehicles at the same time. An NSS position paper that addresses this and related issues can be found at:
[www.nss.org/legislative/blitz/NSS Talking Points August 2014.pdf](http://www.nss.org/legislative/blitz/NSS_Talking_Points_August_2014.pdf).
- Extends the learning period for commercial spaceflight from 2015 until December 31, 2023, an eight year extension. NSS has previously taken the position that the learning period should be extended by 8 years in the same document.

At the current time, there is no mention of the operating life extension of the ISS in the SPACE Act draft. NSS strongly urges modifying the SPACE Act to amend the NASA Authorization Act of 2010 to extend the operating life of the ISS to the year 2024. NSS strongly supports this extension, and has expressed this position in the document cited above, and in
[www.nss.org/legislative/positions/NSS Letter to Congress June 2014.pdf](http://www.nss.org/legislative/positions/NSS_Letter_to_Congress_June_2014.pdf).

NSS believes that NASA needs to support a seamless transition from the current ISS to a future in which the ISS National laboratory continues to operate with NASA as an anchor tenant in multiple commercially owned and operated space stations. A position paper on this topic can be found at:
[www.nss.org/legislative/positions/NSS Position Paper Next Generation Space Stations 2015.pdf](http://www.nss.org/legislative/positions/NSS_Position_Paper_Next_Generation_Space_Stations_2015.pdf).

NSS supports the Office of Space Commerce Act of 2015.

The purpose of this Act is to rename the current Office of Space Commercialization, clarify its purpose, and have the newly renamed department provide support to Federal Government organizations working on Space-Based Positioning, Navigation, and Timing policy, including the National Coordination Office for Space-Based Position, Navigation, and Timing.

NSS supports the general direction of the Space Resource Exploration and Utilization Act of 2015 (HR 1508).

The purpose of this Act is to secure the property rights to materials mined from asteroids by US companies. NSS strongly supports the intent of this Act, and believes that the rights of companies and individuals to own materials mined from asteroids is important to moving toward space development and settlement. However, some terms in the Act, including "asteroid" and "harmful interference," remain undefined. We also believe that the definition of "space resource" may need to be narrowed to avoid conflicts with existing legal regimes. We suggest that the House seek further input from space legal experts to ensure that this well-intentioned Bill is on the correct course.

Best Regards,

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