

August 31, 2026

Administrator Bryan Bedford
Federal Aviation Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Re: Docket No. FAA-2026-8614

Dear Administrator Bedford:

The space community applauds the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for their leadership in proposing to streamline environmental reviews for commercial space activities through the proposed rulemaking on “Waiver of Specified Statutory Requirements for Commercial Space Launch and Reentry Actions.”

As you are aware, the FAA forecasts that the number of annual commercial space launch and reentries could reach 507 by 2036.¹ The 2026 National Space Transportation Policy establishes a goal of 1,000 launches and reentries annually by 2030 and contemplates the need for additional U.S. launch sites.² Over the next few years, several new launch and reentry vehicles are expected to come online, and new launch pads and sites are expected in support of the growing demand for access to space. Meeting this demand is essential to sustaining U.S. leadership in space, including building a permanent presence on the Moon, strengthening national security, and unlocking new economic opportunities in orbit.

The existing environmental review process was developed in an era when U.S. commercial launches numbered in single digits. If national policy now contemplates infrastructure capable of supporting hundreds or more than 1,000 launches and returns annually, repeatedly conducting project-specific environmental reviews every time a vehicle, trajectory, spaceport, or launch cadence changes will become a major bottleneck. In 2024, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reviewed the FAA’s implementation of NEPA requirements on commercial space launch and reentry activities. The review noted that all 22 environmental reviews conducted for space launch and reentry activities as of July 2023 resulted in conclusions that the environmental impacts of the launch and reentry activities were either below significant levels or were mitigated to be below significant levels overall. Furthermore, despite the fact that 19 of the 22 NEPA reviews were based on previous environmental assessments or environmental impact statements, environmental reviews took significant time and resources for federal regulators and industry to complete – often causing FAA to exceed statutory deadlines for license and permit review.

¹https://www.faa.gov/data_research/aviation/aerospace_forecasts/2026_Forecast_Overview.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2026/08/national-security-presidential-memorandum-nspm-17/>

Environmental reviews should protect communities and natural resources without becoming a pacing item for American spaceflight. As commercial spaceflight continues to grow, federal environmental reviews must similarly evolve. This proposed rule would significantly reduce the administrative burden on U.S. space companies seeking licenses or permits for their operations, promote the development of new launch and reentry infrastructure, and facilitate continued American space superiority.

Thank you for your consideration of this comment. The space community looks forward to continuing to work with the Administration to streamline licensing and regulatory requirements in furtherance of U.S. superiority in space.

Sincerely,

American Composites Manufacturers Association
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
Commercial Space Federation
Computer & Communications Industry Association
Global Spaceport Alliance
Space Frontier Foundation
United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation