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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Siting New Spaceports and Use of Priority Airspace for Critical Space Launch Corridors

Docket No. FAA-2026-9736

ACTION: Notice; Request for information (RFI).

SUMMARY: Under the leadership of President Trump and at the direction of Secretary Duffy and Administrator Bedford, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are pursuing opportunities to ensure the United States global dominance in the commercial space transportation industry. The FAA is issuing this RFI to solicit public and industry input on two key transportation-related elements of President Trump's recently published 2026 National Space Transportation Policy (NSTP): siting a new spaceport and the development and use of priority airspace for critical space launch corridors.

DATES: Written comments, including all supporting information and documents, are requested on or before *[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]*.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are encouraged to submit responses to the questions posed in this RFI, along with supporting information, regarding the 2026 NSTP, to docket number **FAA-2026-9736** using any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to http://www.regulations.gov and follow the online instructions for sending your comments electronically.

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- Mail: Send comments to Docket Operations, M-30; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Room W12-140, West Building Ground Floor, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

Privacy: DOT posts any comments received without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to http://www.regulations.gov, as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at http://www.dot.gov/privacy.

Docket: Background documents or comments received may be read at http://www.regulations.gov at any time. Follow the online instructions for accessing the docket or go to the Docket Operations in Room W12-140 of the West Building Ground Floor at 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James Hatt, Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Ave. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20590. Telephone: (202) 267-4156. Email: NSTP2026@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Purpose

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit information to support the Department's analysis in expanding opportunities for commercial space transportation and support the 2026 NSTP objectives.

In 2025, the United States was responsible for 217 of the 329 launches worldwide. This rapid increase cemented the United States as the premier launch country. Looking forward, this ever-increasing launch rate is expected to reach 10,000 FAA-

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licensed launches and reentries a year by 2035, driving the cadence from a few launches a week to several launches and reentries a day. As of today, over half of U.S. launches originated from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station and Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Including Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, these three Federal sites account for 83 percent of U.S. launches.

On December 18, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order (E.O.) 14369, *Ensuring American Space Superiority,* to emphasize the reach of human discovery, secure the Nation's vital economic and security interests, unleash commercial development, and lay the foundation for a new space age.[1] New and upgraded facilities, improved efficiency, and policy reforms will facilitate the security and defense of vital U.S. national and economic commercial space equities. In addition, President Trump's new 2026 NSTP directs the Secretary of Transportation to identify "potential locations for additional launch facilities and targeted development or improvement of launch infrastructure." Consistent with the Administration's E.O. and the NSTP, the Department of Transportation (Department) is requesting input regarding potential locations for new spaceports. Such spaceports would ideally be viable locations to complement or augment many of the operations from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Kennedy Space Center, Vandenberg Space Force Base, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Wallops Flight Facility.

The 2026 NSTP also tasks the Department to "designate priority airspace for critical space launch corridors." The Department seeks input from the space and aviation industries and other interested stakeholders. Specifically, the Department is interested in

[1] 90 FR 60537.

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considerations for developing priority airspace for critical space launch corridors, the ideal requisites for priority airspace, and concepts for differentiating standard airspace used for commercial space activities from priority airspace.

This RFI is an invitation to submit information in response to questions on the topics posed below in Section 4. Responses should be as detailed as possible to facilitate a comprehensive review.

2. Background

The United States is the unquestioned leader in space launch and reentry. Robust and varied commercial, civil, and national security space launch activities form the backbone of U.S. space-based power. Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Kennedy Space Center, and Vandenberg Space Force Base provide unprecedented access to space. Federal ranges are strained to support both governmental and commercial space launches, however. Even with enhanced efficiency at Federal launch and reentry sites, the United States may find availability of launch and reentry sites becoming a bottleneck to achieving the goals of E.O. 14369 and the 2026 NSTP. While enhanced efficiency at Federal launch sites will support the short-term increase in launch cadence and demand, with surges in military, commercial, and civil space activities, the United States must prepare for the rapid expansion of launch cadence by supporting increased spaceport capacity, additional launch sites, and support infrastructure to ensure continuous dominance in commercial space.

The fundamental requirements that drove site selection for the Eastern and Western Test Ranges in the 1950s remain unchanged. Geography allowing launch and reentry over open water, available infrastructure to support launch logistics (e.g., roads

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and utilities), and accessibility to space with minimal overflight of foreign countries were, and remain, key metrics to spaceport success. In addition to the Federal launch and reentry ranges, NASA's Wallops Flight Facility adds capacity to U.S. space launch. However, although Wallops shares many of the attributes of the major Federal ranges, certain characteristics, including tight physical constraints and only four launch pads with no option for heavy spacelift, limit Wallops' ability to support future space technology or to accommodate the expected increase in orbital launch cadence.

The Department oversees FAA-licensed commercial spaceports and private single-use launch sites. A viable spaceport involves several tradeoffs. The Office of Commercial Space Transportation developed a brief *Spaceport Licensing Primer: An Introduction to the Spaceport Licensing Process*[2] to provide information for individuals not familiar with the development of commercial spaceports. The 2026 NSTP recognizes, as a national space transportation goal, that "by 2030, our space transportation ranges must grow to support more than 1,000 launches and reentries every year." To ensure the United States reaches this goal, it must add and modernize launch and reentry infrastructure.

A critical aspect of spaceport development will be funding. Secretary Duffy recently established the National Infrastructure Development Office (NIDO) in the Department to expand and encourage use of public-private partnerships in infrastructure development. Public-private partnerships could be a valuable and innovative tool for structuring spaceport development in particular. This RFI solicits information on funding mechanisms and the potential utility of public-private partnerships in spaceport

[2] https://www.faa.gov/space/office_spaceports/Spaceport-Licensing-Primer.pdf.

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development.

In addition, the 2026 NSTP directs the Department to "designate priority airspace for critical space launch corridors." Currently, U.S. launch operators work with the FAA Air Traffic Organization to establish Aircraft Hazard Areas (AHAs) for space launches to protect aircraft from space objects and falling debris. Because the same spaceports support the majority of U.S. space launches, the same or similar AHAs for safety are repeatedly used. FAA does not currently use the term 'space launch corridor.' The questions below are intended to explore the relationship and assumptions related to the current AHAs and the new critical space launch corridor concept. The concept of airspace corridors, in general, is not new, and airspace corridors for aviation users may vary in definition and use from space launch corridors. For example, airspace corridors for aviation activities may look and operate differently from a potential space launch corridor, as the foundations for space launch safety account for collision and debris. In contrast, most aviation activities need only account for collision. From a space operator's perspective, request time and availability are important factors enabling rapid launch cadence. From an aviation perspective, advance notification of time, size, and duration of AHAs are integral to maintaining both aviation safety and airspace efficiency.

3. Nature of Information Request

The Department may use information obtained through this request to assist in, inform, and research potential locations for viable spaceport sites. The Department will also accept ideas for increasing launch cadence at existing U.S. commercial spaceport sites.

The Department requests that information be provided in a written statement. The

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- Are there locations where the necessary infrastructure already exists for establishing a spaceport? For example, transport links such as wide-load highways or deep-water ports.
- What are the primary costs associated with developing a new spaceport?
- What strategies and technologies could be utilized to expedite construction?
- What are the supply chain constraints for construction, and how could they be addressed?
- What energy constraints exist, and how could they be addressed?
- What funding constraints exist, and how could they be addressed, to include alternative financing structures? How could public-private partnerships best be leveraged to finance spaceport development?

5. *(Critical Space Launch Corridors)* As the Department develops critical space launch corridors, what expectations do the space and aviation industries have regarding prioritization?
    - How can the implementation of space launch corridors limit adverse impacts to airspace efficiency and the continued growth of the air transportation industry?
    - What benefits to either or both industries would be granted when utilizing critical space launch corridors?
    - What adjustments to operational and coordination timelines might be made when utilizing critical space launch corridors?

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- Assuming standard existing procedures apply for activities that do not use critical space launch corridors, what activities would qualify for activation of the critical space launch corridors?
- How would the payload characterization (commercial, civil, or national security) impact the development or use of critical space launch corridors?
- What spaceports would most benefit from critical space launch corridors: all spaceports, major use spaceports, or only Federal spaceports?
- What governance structures would enhance the use of critical launch corridors, to include fees, operational restrictions, or other oversight methodologies?
- What limitations or emergency measures would need to be established to ensure public safety during commercial space activities and continued aviation safety for the flying public?
- What environmental concerns should be considered in determining where to locate, and when to activate, critical space launch corridors?
- How would the identification of a corridor as a "critical space launch corridor," which is not a current term in AHAs, increase awareness, streamline timing requirements, and enable greater launch cadence?

6. What questions are we not asking that are relevant to this effort? Please identify those questions and provide responses.

5. Timeline and Delivery of Submittal:

See also the **DATES** section of this notice. Written comments, including all supporting information and documents, are requested on or before *[INSERT DATE 60*

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DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Submittals*:* Interested parties must respond in writing. Responses to the RFI questions should be concise and reasonable in length.

The Department may request clarification of responses directly related to this RFI through direct contact with respondents. Respondents must identify and clearly mark any proprietary information contained in their submissions and must be prepared to provide justification for confidential treatment to the Department of such designations if requested. This proprietary information will be treated confidentially by the Department; however, nothing alters the Department's obligations under existing law, including any duties owed by the Department under the Freedom of Information Act. The Department may need the Respondent's justification of the proprietary designation to support withholding the documents or information from public disclosure upon request.

Issued in Washington, DC,

Sean P. Duffy
Secretary of Transportation

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