



FCC Seeks Comment on Spectrum Access for Space Launch Activities

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Key Takeaways:

- The FCC is seeking comment on ways in which it can further increase and improve access to spectrum for commercial and federal space launch, reentry, recovery and on-orbit activities.
- The FCC also seeks comment on a petition filed by the CSF, requesting that the Commission replace the Part 87 frequency coordinator for non-federal AMT operations with a more modern light licensing and coordination framework.
- Comments are due September 14, 2026. Reply comments are due September 24, 2026.

Background. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) has undertaken several initiatives to modernize its regulations in response to the exponential growth of commercial space activity, including efforts focused on spectrum access and sharing. Space launch operators use spectrum for pre-launch testing on the ground and for telemetry, tracking and command for vehicle launch and reentry. In September 2023, the Commission adopted a non-federal secondary allocation for Space Operation (Earth-to-space) in the 2025-2110 megahertz (MHz) band, and expanded the non-federal secondary allocation for Space Operation (space-to-Earth) in the 2200-2290 MHz band. The FCC also adopted the Part 26 space launch licensing framework to facilitate access into those bands through a process that allows eligible space launch operators to register each launch site after applying for a non-exclusive, nationwide license and completing federal and non-federal coordination with a third-party frequency coordinator. In responses to the enactment of the Launch Communications Act (LCA), which directed the FCC to, among other things, facilitate,

streamline and finalize rules for commercial space launch and reentry operations in the 2025-2110 MHz, 2200-2290 MHz and 2360-2395 MHz bands, the Commission adopted a non-federal secondary allocation for Space Operation in the 2360-2395 MHz band and included that band in the Part 26 licensing framework. In addition to the FCC's action, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) introduced its Space Launch Frequency Coordination Portal, replacing the legacy email system with a streamlined portal for requesting spectrum for space launch operations.

FCC Space Launch Public Notice. On August 20, President Trump issued the National Space Transportation Policy Presidential Memorandum, directing the FCC to coordinate with relevant agencies to “ensure reliable access to spectrum for commercial and federal space launch, reentry, recovery, and on-orbit activities” and collaborate with the Department of Commerce to provide a report within 180 days on ensuring reliable access to spectrum.

Consistent with this Memorandum, the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Office of Engineering and Technology, and Space Bureau (collectively, the Bureaus) released a Public Notice seeking comment on how the agency can increase and improve reliable spectrum access and achieve “spectrum abundance” for space launch and reentry operations. The Public Notice states that while the 2025-2110 MHz, 2200-2290 MHz and 2360-2395 MHz bands provide a total of 215 MHz of spectrum for space launch and reentry, these allocations are all secondary to the incumbent services operating in the bands. With approximately 200 launch activities occurring annually, and with demand expected to grow, the Bureaus are looking for ways to ensure spectrum keeps pace with demand. To that end, the Public Notice seeks comment on several broad categories of issues, including:

- **Launch Cadence, Geographic Scope and Spectrum Requirements.** The Public Notice seeks comment on the current frequency, cadence and location of launch and reentry activity, including specific inquiries into the total geographic area for which spectrum access is needed and the potential cadence increase for launches and reentries. The Public Notice also seeks comment on the amount of spectrum needed to support current and future space launch and reentry activities, whether additional bands should be made available and what type of spectrum rights (secondary, co-primary or primary) are appropriate.
- **Coordination Improvements.** In order to gain access into the bands, space launch operators must coordinate with federal users through the NTIA and with non-federal

users through Aerospace and Flight Test Radio Coordinating Council (AFTRCC) prior to any launch or reentry activity. The Public Notice seeks comment on improving the existing coordination procedures to ensure that space launch operators have the appropriate accommodations for their activity and that spectrum is used efficiently.

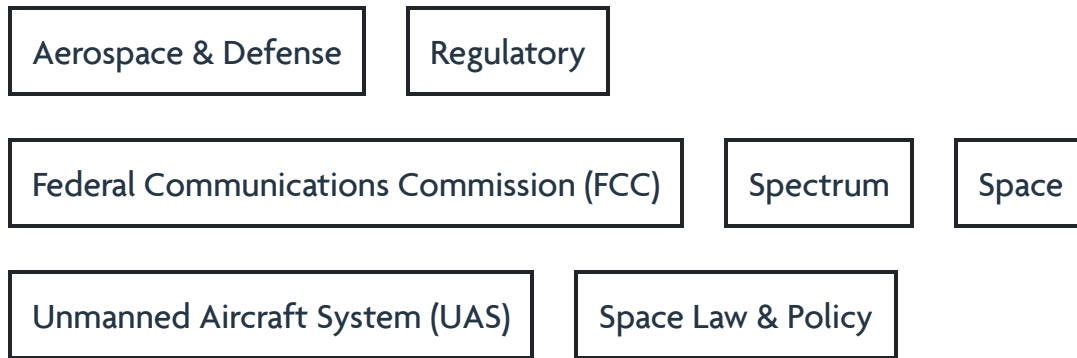
- **Ancillary Spectrum Needs.** Acknowledging that uncrewed surface vessels (USV) and uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) operating in maritime or aerospace environments may cause harmful interference to launch activities, the Public Notice seeks comment on the impact that those USV and UAS operations could have on space launch activities and on additional actions that it should consider to ensure that space launch operations are conducted in a safe, reliable and efficient manner.

CSF Petition. The Public Notice also seeks comment on the [petition](#) for rulemaking filed by Commercial Space Federation (CSF) requesting that the FCC eliminate the Part 87 “frequency advisory committees” requirements and remove AFTRCC as the non-federal Aeronautical Mobile Telemetry (AMT) frequency coordinator. In place of AFTRCC, CSF proposes that the Commission implement a database assisted light-licensing framework for coordination of in-band and adjacent band operations in the 1435-1535 MHz, 2360-2395 MHz and 5091-5150 MHz bands. The Public Notice seeks comment on these proposals.

Conclusion. This Public Notice represents the administration’s latest step in continuing efforts to align spectrum policy with the rapid growth of the U.S. commercial space launch industry. Comments to the Public Notice are due by September 14, 2026, and reply comments by September 24, 2026.

Please let us know if you have questions relating to the FCC’s proposed actions or are interested in providing comments in the proceedings.

Categories



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