

Space Policy Conference 2026

***The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC): Mitigating
Orbital Debris & Promoting Innovation for Commercial Space***

ITU-APT Foundation of India

July 22-23, 2026

New Delhi, India



Space Communications Legal Framework:

Legal Authorization for What FCC

Does Legislation

- Communications Act of 1934
 - The Commission derives its main authority from this act.
- Communications Satellite Act of 1962, as modified by the ORBIT Act of 2000
 - Augments the Communications Act with respect to space communication.
 - Prohibits auction of satellite spectrum.
- Code of Federal Regulations Title 47
 - Part 5 Experimental Communications
 - Part 25* Satellite Communications (Space and Earth Stations)
 - Part 97 Amateur Radio Operations

** A proposed rulemaking would remove Part 25 and replace it with Part 100.*

Commercial Space Regulation in the USA

**Federal Aviation
Administration (FAA)**
*Department of
Transportation*

Launch, reentry, &
launch sites

**Federal
Communications
Commission (FCC)**

Spectrum
management

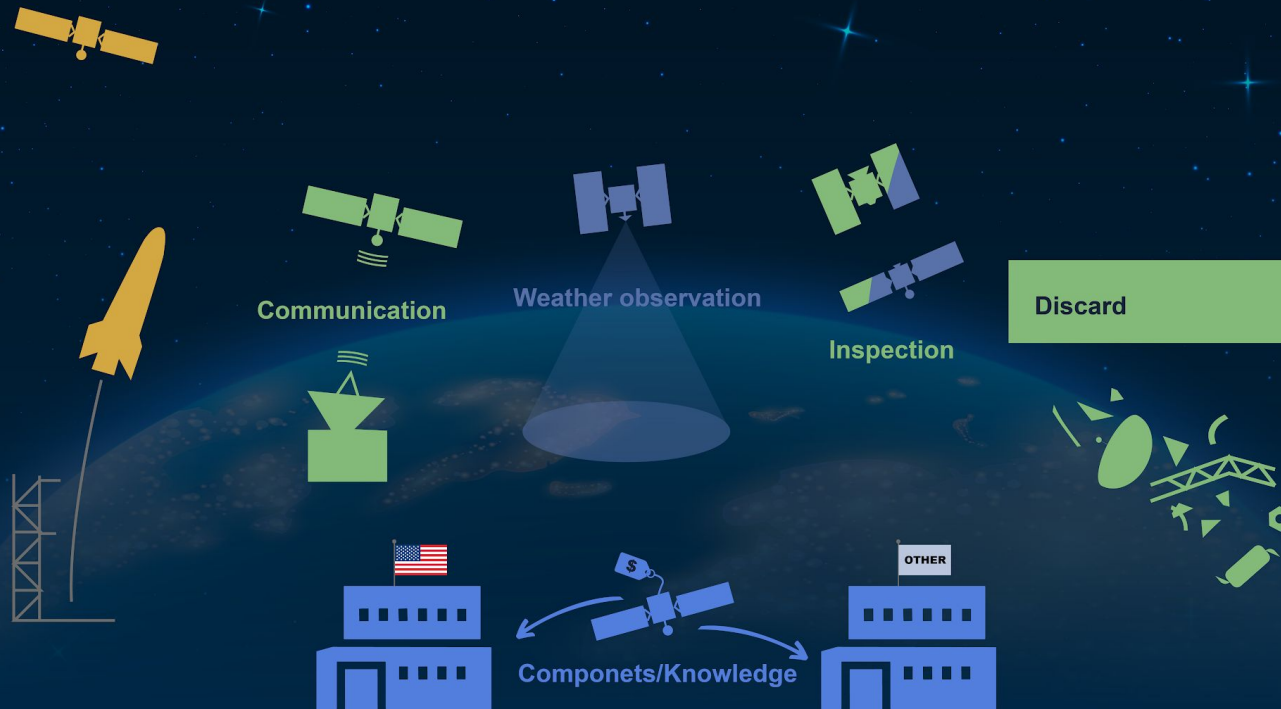
**Office of Space
Commerce (OSC)**
*Department of
Commerce*

Remote
sensing data

**Directorate of Defense
Trade Controls (DDTC)**
*Department of
State*

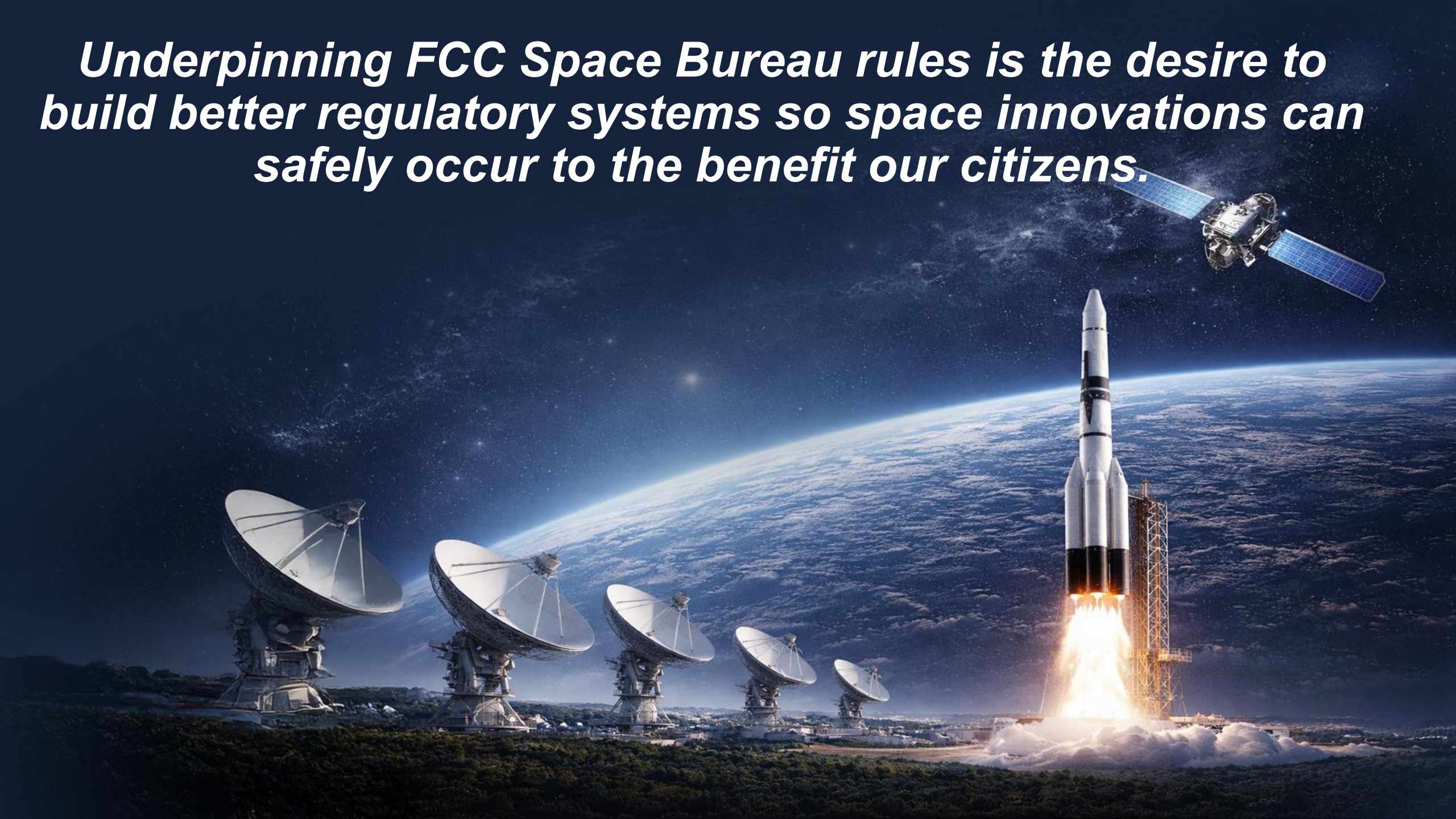
**Bureau of Industry
and Security (BIS)**
*Department of
Commerce*

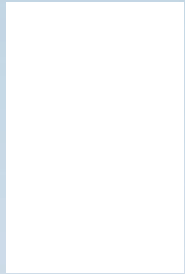
Export
control



The FCC, through the Space Bureau, authorizes spectrum use for commercial space stations and earth stations operating in the United States.

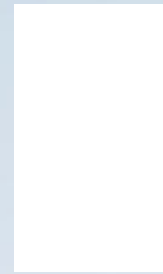
Underpinning FCC Space Bureau rules is the desire to build better regulatory systems so space innovations can safely occur to the benefit our citizens.





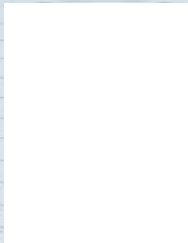
Preventing Harmful Interference

The Space Bureau's core mandate is to prevent satellite systems from causing harmful interference to one another or to terrestrial services.



Efficient Spectrum Use

The FCC seeks to ensure that satellite operators efficiently use the spectrum to deliver services.



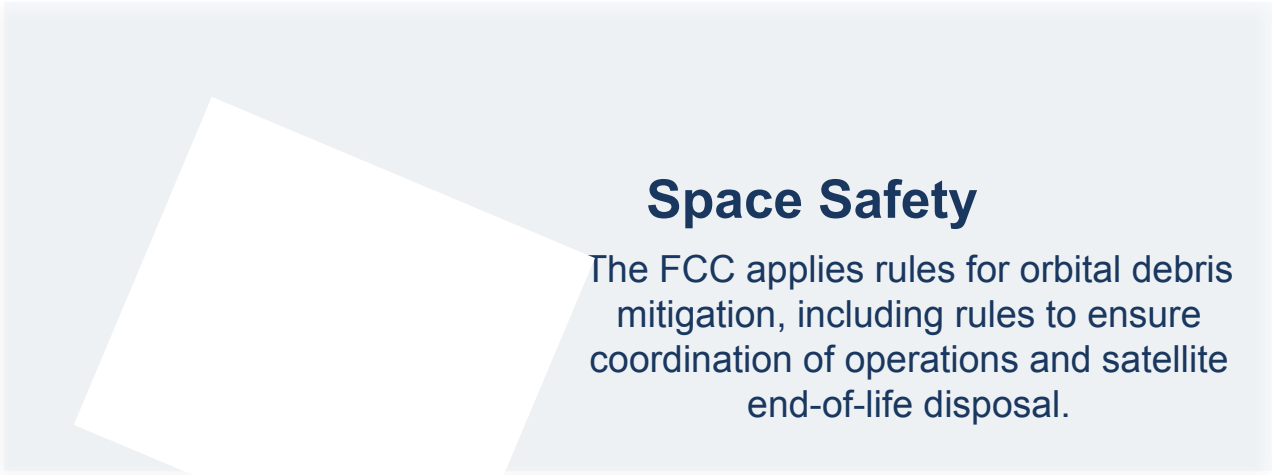
National Security

The FCC coordinates with Executive Branch agencies (e.g., NTIA, DoW) to ensure satellite operations comport with U.S. national security.



Space Safety

The FCC applies rules for orbital debris mitigation, including rules to ensure coordination of operations and satellite end-of-life disposal.



Space Safety

The FCC applies rules for orbital debris mitigation, including rules to ensure coordination of operations and satellite end-of-life disposal.

Since 2004, the FCC has adopted a series of robust, world-leading orbital debris rules for its licensees and market access grantees

<https://www.fcc.gov/space/orbital-debris>

FCC-authorized satellite systems have an ongoing obligation to satisfy the most robust orbital debris mitigation review. The review includes assessments on:

- *Coordination with other systems*
- *Satellite maneuverability & propulsion*
- *Trackability, location transparency, and space situational awareness*
- *Characteristics that present collision risk*
- *Collision risk probabilities*
- *Post-mission disposal*
- *And more...*



FCC Orbital Debris Mitigation (ODM) Checklist

Last Updated: February 2024

This checklist may be helpful for applicants in preparing their orbital debris mitigation plans and ensuring that all orbital debris mitigation requirements are addressed in their submissions. The checklist incorporates not only items specifically addressed in the Commission's rules, but also additional recommendations for submission by applicants, drawn from common information requests made by Commission staff during the application review process. In addition to this document, applicants may find it helpful to use the FCC's Orbital Debris Mitigation (ODM) Plan Worksheet.

I. Mission Overview and Spacecraft Information

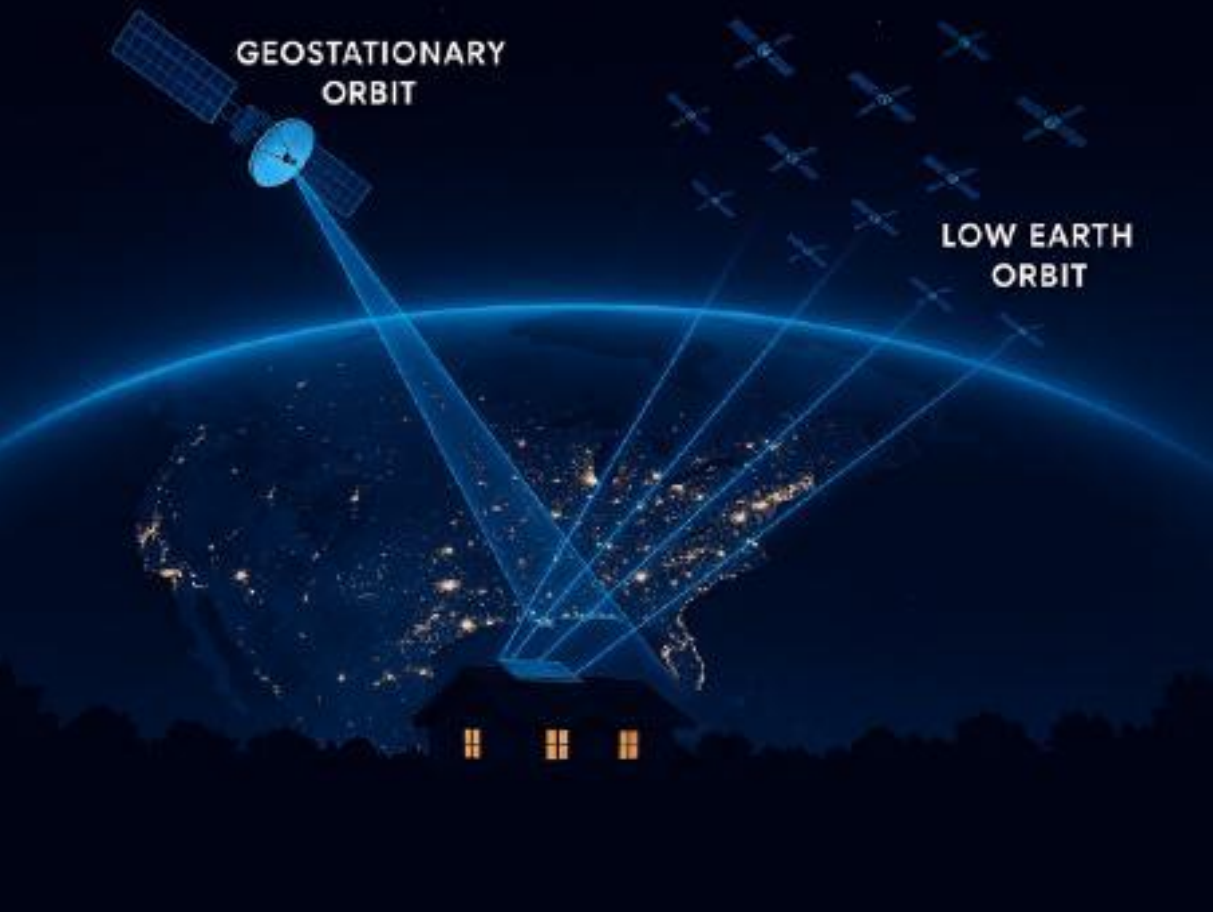
- ☐ A statement describing the extent of satellite maneuverability, including whether or not the space station design includes a propulsion system. *§ 25.114(d)(14)(iv)(A)(4)*. Indicate the components required for the propulsion system to operate reliably, including communications with the satellite.
- ☐ A statement describing the accuracy, if any, with which orbital parameters will be maintained, including apogee, perigee, inclination, and the right ascension of the ascending node(s). **If a system is not able to maintain orbital tolerances, e.g., its propulsion system will not be used for orbital maintenance**, that fact must be included in the debris mitigation disclosure. Such systems must also

- ***Underpinning orbital debris rules is the desire to build better regulatory systems so space innovations can safely occur, spectrum efficiency is increased, and benefit to our citizens is realized***
- ***This initiative includes assessing outdated rules and examining ways to improve satellite coordination to enable better consumer services and increased economy activity***

For example... 

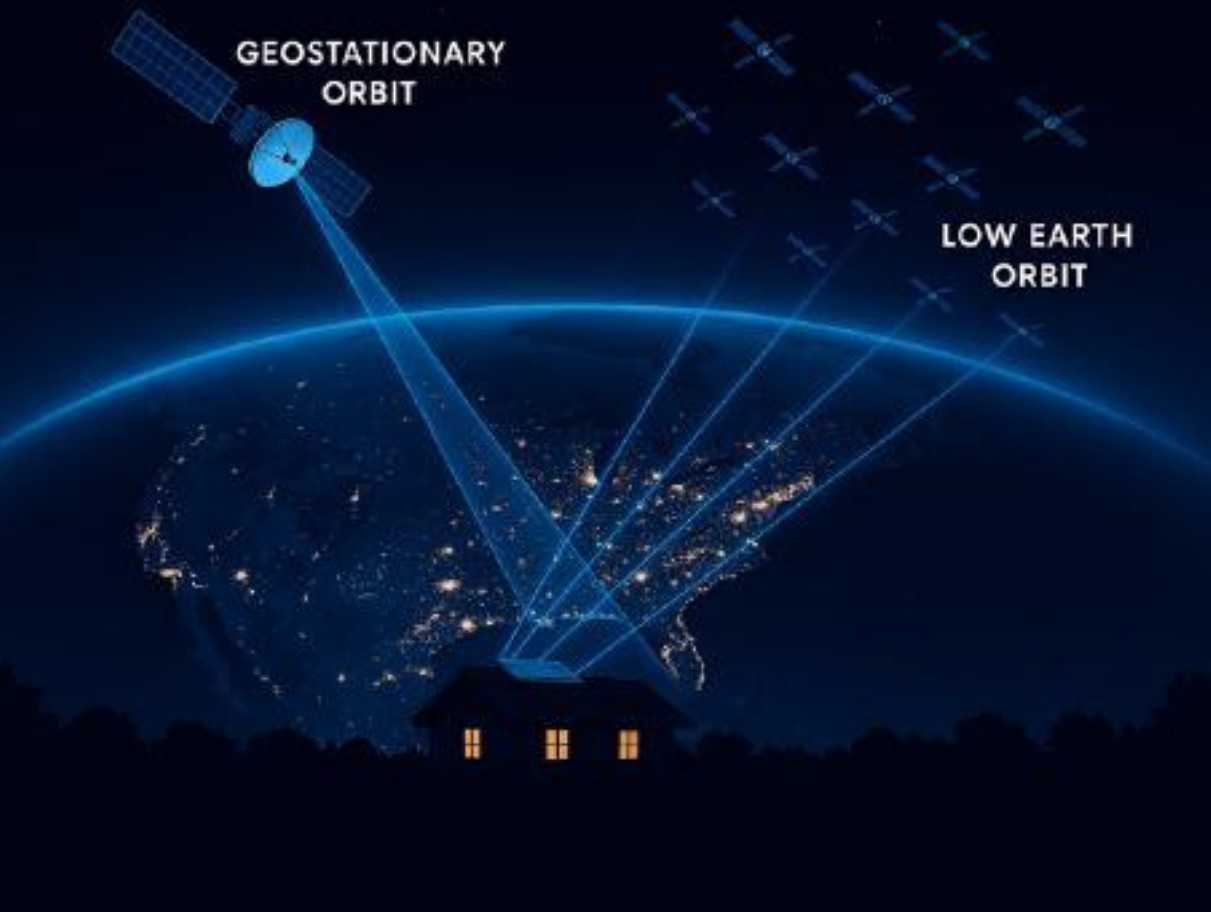
A recent FCC rule reassessment improves NGSO-GSO sharing by modifying EPFD limits and enabling coordination in the U.S.

GSO-NGSO Spectrum Sharing



- GSO and NGSO FSS systems operate in shared spectrum in the 10.7-12.7, 17.3-18.6, and 19.7-20.2 GHz bands.
- Decades-old power limits called equivalent power flux density (EPFD) limits apply to NGSO systems in these bands to protect GSO networks.
- Single most impactful regulatory constraint on NGSO systems are EPFD limits.
- FCC recently updated this sharing framework.
- The benefits of these changes may total well **over \$2 billion** in the U.S., with capacity **increases of 100% to 700%** possible using the same number of in-orbit NGSO

GSO-NGSO Spectrum Sharing



FCC Decision April 2026 ([FCC 26-26](#)):

- Replaces the 1990s-era EPFD framework with modern, performance-based GSO protection criteria.
- Extends the Commission's framework for good-faith coordination and allows NGSO and GSO operators to develop appropriate interference protections through voluntary, private agreements.
- Adopts the following technical backstops to protect GSO systems when coordination has not been reached:
 - A long-term protection criterion of **3%** time-weighted average throughput degradation for GSO satellite links using adaptive coding modulation (ACM);
 - A short-term protection criterion of **0.1%** absolute increase in link unavailability;
 - A supplemental protection criterion of **-10.5 dB** interference-to-noise (I/N) for 80% of the time for GSO satellite links that do not use ACM, such as point-to-multipoint video transmissions; and
 - A supplemental protection requirement for NGSO systems to observe a minimum **3-degree** avoidance angle of the GSO arc.



THANK YOU