

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Parts 401, 404, 415, 417, 431, 435, 437, 450, and 453

[Docket No.: FAA-2023-1858; Notice No. 23-13]

RIN 2120-AK81

Mitigation Methods for Launch Vehicle Upper Stages on the Creation of Orbital Debris; Withdrawal

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM); withdrawal.

SUMMARY: This document informs the public that FAA has determined not to pursue the previously published NPRM, which proposed to require that upper stages of commercial launch vehicles and other components resulting from launch or reentry be removed from orbit within 25 years after launch, either through atmospheric disposal or maneuver to an acceptable disposal orbit. FAA is withdrawing this action to further consider comments received.

DATES: The NPRM published on September 26, 2023, at 88 FR 65835 is withdrawn, effective January 15, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Earle, Space Policy and Outreach Branch Manager, Office of Commercial Space Transportation (ASZ-220), Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20591; telephone (202) 267-8376; email stephen.earle@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On September 26, 2023, FAA published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) titled “Mitigation Methods for Launch Vehicle Upper Stages on the Creation of Orbital

Debris.”¹ The proposed rule would require upper stages of commercial launch vehicles and other components resulting from launch or reentry be removed from orbit within 25 years after launch, either through atmospheric disposal or maneuver to an acceptable disposal orbit. The proposed rule would reduce the amount of additional debris created, as well as limit potential collisions with functional spacecraft and other debris already on-orbit.

Reason for Withdrawal

FAA has determined that this regulatory course of action requires further study. Therefore, FAA is withdrawing the NPRM to further consider the 40 comments received during the NPRM comment period. Of the 40 comments received, 6 comments related to the costs of remediating orbital debris, and 7 comments expressed concern with respect to FAA’s explicit authority to take some of the action proposed. The agency intends to review FAA’s authority as it relates to further regulating orbital debris mitigation. Additionally, FAA intends to review the space launch industry cost inputs and expectations with respect to debris mitigation activities.

Conclusion

Withdrawal of the NPRM does not preclude FAA from issuing a rulemaking action regarding orbital debris in the future nor does it commit the agency to any future course of action. The agency will propose any future changes to the Code of Federal Regulations through the appropriate rulemaking processes.

Therefore, FAA withdraws Notice No. 23-13, published at 88 FR 65835 on September 26, 2023.

Issued under authority provided by 49 U.S.C. 106(f), 44701(a), and 44703 in Washington, DC.

Bryan K. Bedford,
Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

15 CFR Part 28

[Docket ID 260107-0013]

RIN 0605-AA73

Removing Redundant, Obsolete, and Inefficient Provisions From the Regulations Governing Restrictions on Lobbying

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary of Commerce, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce (“Commerce”) is proposing to amend its regulations governing restrictions on lobbying. Specifically, Commerce is proposing to remove two redundant and unnecessary compliance provisions and remove two reporting requirements that are obsolete and unwarranted. This action is necessary to reduce regulatory complexity and streamline the regulations governing restrictions on lobbying. The intended effects of this action are to eliminate redundancy, promote administrative efficiency, and update Commerce’s lobbying regulations to properly reflect and implement the underlying statutory authority in its current form.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 17, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Comments must be submitted via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>, Document ID: DOC-2026-0001.

However, if you require an accommodation or cannot otherwise submit your comments via <https://www.regulations.gov>, please contact the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Comments that are not submitted via <https://www.regulations.gov> will not be accepted absent such a request.

Commerce will not accept comments submitted after the comment period closes. To ensure that Commerce does not receive duplicate copies, please submit your comments only once. Additionally, please include the Docket ID DOC-2026-0001 at the top of your comments.

Federal eRulemaking Portal: Please go to <https://www.regulations.gov> to submit your comments electronically. Information on using <https://www.regulations.gov>, including

¹ 88 FR 65835.