



Infrastructure Working Group Findings and Recommendations

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Presented to: COMSTAC

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F&R #1: Federal Matching Grants Programs

Finding: Just as airports provide infrastructure required for airplanes to access the National Airspace System (NAS), spaceports provide the infrastructure necessary to enable access to space, a critical national capability. However, spaceports are the only form of transportation infrastructure without dedicated and consistent access to a federal matching grants program.

Recommendation: The COMSTAC recommends that the FAA conduct a study of infrastructure funding mechanisms for non-space related transportation modes (e.g., highways, aviation, shipping, rail, etc.) and assess their applicability to funding of spaceport infrastructure.

F&R #2: Spaceport Development Definitions

Finding: Since the statute governing aviation activities does not include the space industry in its definition of “aeronautical” activities, the space industry finds it difficult or impossible to obtain long-term leases or to benefit from Airport Infrastructure Programs (AIP) funding at spaceports collocated with airports.

Finding: Industry supports the FAA HR 4 Reauthorization bill which calls for the newly formed FAA AST Office of Spaceports to “develop policies that promote infrastructure improvements at spaceports” (51 U.S.C. § 51501(b)) and requires a GAO assessment by September 2019th of “potential mechanisms to provide Federal support to spaceports, including the [AIP program and Space Transportation Infrastructure Matching Grants] (51 U.S.C. § 51501(d)(1)).

Finding: The AIP references “airport development” and “aeronautical” benefit (see, e.g., 49 U.S. C. § 47105 regarding project grant applications). However, legislation would likely be required to redefine “aeronautical” to include “space” under this act by the DOT/FAA to include space activities.

Recommendation: The COMSTAC recommends that the U.S. government ensure that (“spaceport development and “space” benefits are equivalent to aeronautical uses) “airport development” and “aeronautical” benefits apply to “spaceport development” and “space” benefits (at licensed spaceports collocated with airports). Additionally, the COMSTAC recommends that “aeronautical” and “space” be considered as equivalent terms in relation to funding mechanisms and leasing contracts.

F&R #3: Streamlining Part 420

Finding: Current regulations outlined in 14 CFR Part 420 (License to Operate a Launch Site) only fit one scenario very well: orbital launch vehicles from dedicated launch ranges. For other scenarios, the regulations and licensing processes sometime lack the definitions, decision trees, and modules needed to address the relevant requirements for each case. This can result in over-regulation, under-regulation and/or lack of regulatory accuracy and relevance.

Finding: The FAA should begin a new effort with the commercial spaceflight industry to review potential methods for streamlining and realigning launch and reentry site licensing regulations.

Recommendation: The COMSTAC recommends FAA convene an ARC tasked with updating launch and reentry site licensing regulations. This ARC should deliver recommendations for modification and streamlining of the existing regulations as needed.