

OSC Releases ‘Call for Interest’ in Space Commerce Certification Pilot Program

September 2, 2026

On August 20, 2026, the Department of Commerce Office of Space Commerce (OSC) announced a call for interest for companies interested in participating in a pilot phase of the newly established Space Commerce Certification (SCC) framework. Submissions are due October 5, 2026, and should be submitted to Space.Certification@noaa.gov.

Space Commerce Certification framework

Under the proposed framework, companies would apply for per-mission certification and commit to adhering to the OSC-imposed “light-touch” requirements, such as orbital debris mitigation and payload review. OSC would conduct basic due diligence while simultaneously circulating the application to relevant portions of the interagency to identify any concerns relating to national security, foreign policy or international obligations, and safety of operations. Agencies involved in the process would include OSC’s Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs department, Federal Communications Commission, Federal Aviation Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration and Department of War. If no concerns are identified, certification would be granted within 120 days of submission.

The SCC framework is a process designed to facilitate approval of mission authorizations for activities not explicitly governed by existing regulatory frameworks and provide additional certainty for such operators. Novel space activities include, but are not limited to, in-space manufacturing, orbital datacenters, satellite servicing, lunar operations and commercial inhabitable stations.

Participation in SCC pilot phase

OSC is inviting expressions of interest in participating in a pilot phase intended to test and further develop the new framework. Participants will have the opportunity to provide the agencies with feedback on the process. OSC will be highly selective during this pilot phase and will prioritize missions that are critical to industry advancement, are sufficiently likely to occur and represent high-utility use cases.

Interested companies must include in their submission to OSC:

1. The nominated entity’s full name, any affiliations and contact information.
2. Evidence of US entity ownership/operation.
3. A clear description of the intended operations, the space objects involved and the targeted launch/deployment timeline.
4. A statement confirming the submitter’s commitment to working with OSC, in a manner as transparent to the public as possible, to develop best practices.

If you are interested in learning more about the SCC pilot phase or framework, please reach out to one of the Cooley lawyers listed below.

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