

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: ***In the Matter of Space Innovation, IB Docket No. 22-271; Facilitating Capabilities for In-space Servicing, Assembly, and Manufacturing, IB Docket No. 22-272, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (February 15, 2024)***

In technology 2007 was a big year. In fact, Thomas Friedman wrote a book about it, “Thank You for Being Late,” which drew attention to how the launch of the iPhone, the globalization of social media platforms and the creation of Watson, an early Artificial Intelligence system, all took place during this year. But something else happened in 2007 that deserves attention. There was a game-changing launch at Cape Canaveral called Orbital Express. It was an experiment by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency that pioneered a new type of space mission featuring two satellites that would rendezvous in our skies in order to transfer propellant and hardware. The idea was simple—if we can service satellites in orbit we can extend the lifespan of their missions, enhance their capabilities, and reduce their costs.

Fast forward to now. A new space age is here and the ideas behind Orbital Express have taken hold in our skies with in-space servicing, assembly, and manufacturing—or ISAM. Today, ISAM is a growing part of the space economy. It includes a range of in-space activities, from repairing and refueling satellites to assembling whole new systems in space. It can even include systems for the manufacturing of new parts, products, or infrastructure in orbit. Plus, it can help with space sustainability through the development of technologies to capture and remove orbital debris and assist with reuse and recycling of in-orbit systems. On top of that, it has the potential to support new services like space tugs and new products that leverage microgravity to achieve results impossible back on Earth.

I believe our grandest ambitions for space will depend on developing these ISAM capabilities. Because if we want to expand connectivity on Earth, address global climate change, protect our national security, and support human life on the moon and beyond, we will benefit from ISAM systems.

That is why today we are proposing a new framework to license ISAM space stations and ensure they have access to the communications necessary for their effective use. We have developed common sense, flexible rules that provide ISAM operators a clear path forward for their applications for novel use cases so they can develop new services in our skies.

While Orbital Express left orbit over a decade ago, it was an incredible experiment. In fact, this rulemaking might not have been possible without it. It is also incredible to take a look back at Thomas Friedman’s book about 2007. Because if you comb through the index, space gets a single mention. Only one. But the good news is at this agency we clearly see the vast possibilities of the space economy and are taking steps now to support it.

Thank you to the staff who worked on this effort in our Space Innovation docket. From the Space Bureau: Victor Allison, Christina Almonte, Bill Belt, Matias Cava, Steve Duall, Jameyanne Fuller, Jennifer Gilsean, Julie Kearney, Whitney Lohmeyer, Karl Kensinger, Scott Mackoul, Julia Malette, Kerry Murray, Brandon Padgett, Jeanine Poltronieri, Troy Tanner, Patrick Webre, and Merissa Velez. From the Enforcement Bureau: Jeremy Marcus, Ryan McDonald and Victoria Randazzo. From the Office of Communications Business Opportunities: Joycelyn James, Joy Ragsdale and Chana Wilkerson. From the Office of Economics and Analytics: Aleks Yankelevich. From the Office of Engineering and Technology: Jamie Coleman, Michael Ha, Ira Keltz, Nick Oros, Jamison Prime, and Serey Thai. From the Office of the General Counsel: Susan Aaron, Deborah Broderson, David Konczal, Andrea Kelly, Anjali Singh, and Jeff Steinberg. And from the Office of International Affairs: Nese Gundelsberger, Dante Ibarra, and Michele Wu-Bailey.