

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER NATHAN SIMINGTON**

Re: *Mitigation of Orbital Debris in the New Space Age*, IB Docket No. 18-313

While I support today's item, I would be remiss if I did not restate my conviction that the FCC should apply the same orbital debris rules to both U.S.-licensed providers and market access licensees authorized in other countries. The FCC must move in this direction as a high-priority policy goal.

Our current process allows non-U.S.-licensed space stations to satisfy orbital debris rules by showing that debris mitigation plans for the space stations for which U.S. market access is requested are subject to direct oversight by the licensing country. While in principle such an approach may be sound, in practice it often places U.S.-licensed providers, and ultimately the U.S. as a policy leader, at a disadvantage. American companies should not be penalized for complying with a rigorous and advanced domestic regime that takes contemporary realities into account. The American government should not tolerate behavior from market access licensees that it would not accept from domestic corporations. The current process implicitly approves debris mitigation regimes that are typically not as robust as the U.S.'s, or as clear cut—disadvantaging U.S.-licensed providers.

This is why I have advocated for extending the FCC's orbital debris rules to market access providers. This not only levels the playing field for U.S.-licensed providers, but also acts as a regulatory hook for creating default rules for *all* commercial operators. We can create a unitary set of clear and flexible rules for safe commercial space operation for all countries, which only makes sense because in space there are no borders.

I therefore, once again, call upon the FCC to reconsider the current approach so that we can firm up the U.S.'s global leadership on orbital debris mitigation policy and incentivize responsible, modern stewardship of the space debris environment. As for today's item—thank you to the Space Bureau staff for all of their hard work, as always.