

S 1648

Launch Communications Act

Congress: 118 (2023–2025, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Science, Technology, Communications

Introduced: May 17, 2023

Current Status: Became Public Law No: 118-85.

Latest Action: Became Public Law No: 118-85. (Sep 26, 2024)

Law: 118-85 (Enacted Sep 26, 2024)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/1648>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Schmitt, Eric [R-MO]

Party: Republican • **State:** MO • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (1 total)

| Cosponsor | Party / State | Role | Date Joined |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------|--------------|
| Sen. Hickenlooper, John W. [D-CO] | D · CO | | May 17, 2023 |

Committee Activity

| Committee | Chamber | Activity | Date |
|---|---------|-------------|--------------|
| Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee | Senate | Reported By | Sep 18, 2023 |

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Science, Technology, Communications

Related Bills

| Bill | Relationship | Last Action |
|------------|--------------|---|
| 118 HR 682 | Related bill | Jul 26, 2023: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. |

Launch Communications Act

This act requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to facilitate access to specified broadband spectrum frequencies for commercial space launches and reentries.

Under current law, commercial missions launching from the United States to space must use government-owned spectrum to communicate with the rockets during launch, and private companies must apply to the FCC to receive special temporary authority to use such spectrum. On June 28, 2021, the FCC issued a final rule adopting a nonfederal secondary allocation of the 2200-2290 megahertz frequencies of the electromagnetic spectrum for use during commercial space launches and reentries.

The act requires the FCC to (1) adopt service rules for access to additional frequencies for commercial space launches and reentries and complete associated rulemaking activities (e.g., those that set technical specifications and eligibility requirements), and (2) allocate the frequencies.

The FCC must also streamline the process for access authorizations, including by providing for (1) authorizations to access specified frequencies for multiple commercial space launches and reentries from one or more federal or private launch or reentry sites, (2) authorizations for multiple uses of such frequencies for a commercial space launch or reentry, (3) electronic filing and processing of access applications, and (4) improved coordination between the FCC and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to increase the speed of the review of such applications.

Actions Timeline

- **Sep 26, 2024:** Signed by President.
- **Sep 26, 2024:** Became Public Law No: 118-85.
- **Sep 24, 2024:** Presented to President.
- **Sep 17, 2024:** Mrs. Rodgers (WA) moved to suspend the rules and pass the bill.
- **Sep 17, 2024:** Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H5309-5310)
- **Sep 17, 2024:** DEBATE - The House proceeded with forty minutes of debate on S. 1648.
- **Sep 17, 2024:** Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill Agreed to by voice vote. (text: CR H5309)
- **Sep 17, 2024:** On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill Agreed to by voice vote. (text: CR H5309)
- **Sep 17, 2024:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Nov 6, 2023:** Message on Senate action sent to the House.
- **Nov 6, 2023:** Received in the House.
- **Nov 6, 2023:** Held at the desk.
- **Oct 31, 2023:** Passed/agreed to in Senate: Passed Senate with amendments by Unanimous Consent.(consideration: CR S5266-5267; text: CR S5267)
- **Oct 31, 2023:** Passed Senate with amendments by Unanimous Consent. (consideration: CR S5266-5267; text: CR S5267)
- **Sep 18, 2023:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Reported by Senator Cantwell with amendments. Without written report.
- **Sep 18, 2023:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 209.
- **Jul 27, 2023:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Ordered to be reported with amendments favorably.
- **May 17, 2023:** Introduced in Senate
- **May 17, 2023:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.