

S 447

ORBITS Act of 2023

Congress: 118 (2023–2025, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Science, Technology, Communications

Introduced: Feb 15, 2023

Current Status: Held at the desk.

Latest Action: Held at the desk. (Nov 6, 2023)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/447>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Hickenlooper, John W. [D-CO]

Party: Democratic • **State:** CO • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (5 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Cantwell, Maria [D-WA]	D · WA		Feb 15, 2023
Sen. Feinstein, Dianne [D-CA]	D · CA		Feb 15, 2023
Sen. Lummis, Cynthia M. [R-WY]	R · WY		Feb 15, 2023
Sen. Sinema, Kyrsten [I-AZ]	I · AZ		Feb 15, 2023
Sen. Wicker, Roger F. [R-MS]	R · MS		Feb 15, 2023

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee	Senate	Reported By	Sep 12, 2023

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Science, Technology, Communications

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

Orbital Sustainability Act of 2023 or the ORBITS Act of 2023

This bill directs specified agencies to take actions to remediate orbital debris (human-made space objects that are no longer in use and can harm orbiting satellites and on-orbit activities).

The Department of Commerce must publish and periodically update a list of orbital debris that may be remediated to reduce the risk of harm to orbiting satellites and on-orbit activities. In addition, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) must (1) establish a demonstration program to foster the development of technologies to remediate the orbital debris on the list, and (2) carry out other research and development activities to advance technologies for remediating orbital debris.

NASA (and other relevant agencies) may also contract for remediation services to support the commercial availability of such services.

Additionally, the National Space Council must update the *Orbital Debris Mitigation Standard Practices* within 90 days of the enactment of the bill and update them periodically thereafter. The updates must address matters including satellite constellations and other planned space systems, collision risks, and disposal of space systems after missions. The updates must inform (1) regulations of other agencies concerning orbital debris, and (2) bilateral and multilateral discussions with other countries concerning certain space activities.

Finally, Commerce must facilitate the development of standard practices to coordinate on-orbit space traffic. Upon completion of the practices, Commerce and other federal departments must promote their adoption and use for space missions.

Actions Timeline

- **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:** Measure laid before Senate by unanimous consent. (consideration: CR S5262-5266)
- **Oct 31, 2023:** The committee amendment as amended agreed to by Unanimous Consent.
- **Oct 31, 2023:** Passed/agreed to in Senate: Passed Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent.(text: CR S5264-5266)
- **Oct 31, 2023:** Passed Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent. (text: CR S5264-5266)
- **Sep 12, 2023:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Reported by Senator Cantwell with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Without written report.
- **Sep 12, 2023:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 206.
- **Jul 27, 2023:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **Feb 15, 2023:** Introduced in Senate
- **Feb 15, 2023:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

LegiList

CONGRESS, MADE CLEAR.

Search Every Federal Bill, Law, and Vote

LegiList is the fastest way to research Congress. Track any bill from introduction to enactment, see how every legislator voted, follow committee activity, and read the full text of every bill — all in one place, always up to date.

legilist.com

Free Course: Learn How Congress Actually Works

LegiList Learn is a free, self-paced course that walks through the entire legislative process — from drafting a bill to a presidential signature. Seven modules, plain language, no politics. Earn a certificate when you finish.

legilist.com/learn

Developer API: Build Apps on Legislative Data

The LegiList API gives developers direct access to bills, votes, legislators, committees, and more. Start free with 1,000 requests per day — no credit card required. Upgrade to Pro when you need to scale.

legilist.com/api

Public data belongs to the public. — legilist.com