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The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee's Subcommittee on Space held a hearing on September 7, which assessed how previous legislation has impacted the private sector's ability to obtain licenses and data for commercial remote sensing purposes.

Witnesses and Members of Congress alike voiced concerns that legislation, such as the Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act (H.R. 2262), unnecessarily restricts data and extends waiting periods for private remote sensing license applications. According to the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#), the approval period can last up to 120 days, which puts strain on businesses that have invested in remote sensing technology.

Proponents of the current regulations argue that they are necessary to protect sensitive geospatial data and enhance national security. Opponents, however, argue that the regulations have hampered government's ability to keep up with the rapidly growing commercial remote sensing industry.

Full Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) insisted that government regulations must be updated to meet today's needs. He and others argued that restrictive regulatory procedures not only inconvenience license applicants, but also affect the ability of the U.S. to maintain its position as a world leader in remote sensing. Furthermore, they argued that the private sector's access to remote sensing data will enhance, not hinder, national security by providing additional sources of important information. NOAA is expected to complete a report on the Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act suggesting updates to licensing regulations by November 25, 2016.

Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), House Committee on Science, Space & Technology – Subcommittee on Space, [Congress.gov](#)
