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Author: Mr. Wayne Monteith

Federal Aviation Administration Office of Commercial Space Transportation (FAA/AST), United States,  
wayne.r.monteith@faa.gov

Ms. Michelle Murray

Federal Aviation Administration Office of Commercial Space Transportation (FAA/AST), United States,  
michelle.murray@faa.gov

Mr. Charles Huet

Federal Aviation Administration Office of Commercial Space Transportation (FAA/AST), United States,  
charles.huet@faa.gov

Mr. John Sloan

Federal Aviation Administration Office of Commercial Space Transportation (FAA/AST), United States,  
john.sloan@faa.gov

Dr. Ken Davidian

Federal Aviation Administration Office of Commercial Space Transportation (FAA/AST), United States,  
ken.davidian@faa.gov

STREAMLINED FAA COMMERCIAL LAUNCH AND REENTRY LICENSING, FINAL RULE

**Abstract**

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration's Office of Commercial Space Transportation published the Final Rule for "Streamlined Launch and Reentry Licensing Requirements" (SLR2) in December 2020. The SLR2 Final Rule creates a flexible and performance-based 21st century licensing regime that streamlines and simplifies licensing of commercial launch and reentry operations, enables innovation, results in net cost savings to US industry, and maintains public safety.

The SLR2 Final Rule is a result of US Presidential Space Policy Directive-2 (SPD-2), "Streamlining Regulations on Commercial Use of Space," issued in May 2018. SPD-2 assigned the Secretary of Transportation to review regulations, including consideration of "(i) requiring a single license for all types of commercial space flight launch and re-entry operations; and (ii) replacing prescriptive requirements in the commercial space flight launch and re-entry licensing process with performance-based criteria." The Department of Transportation (DOT) delegated implementation of SPD-2 to the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation (FAA/AST). Since 1989, DOT/FAA has licensed (or permitted) over 400 commercial launches and reentries.

The final rule consolidates the safety requirements for the launch of suborbital and orbital expendable and reusable launch vehicles, and the reentry of reentry vehicles into a new 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 450. In addition, the final rule establishes a single license by eliminating the FAA's current launch-specific license and launch operator license for ELVs, mission-specific license and operator license for RLVs, and reentry-specific license and reentry-operator license for reentry vehicles. The final rule also allows operators to apply for a single license to authorize operations at multiple launch or reentry sites. Part 450 relies on a safety framework that provides the flexibility needed to accommodate current and future launch and reentry operations and encompasses both ground safety and flight safety. The Final Rule goes into effect in March 2021.

This paper provides an overview of FAA's Streamlined Launch and Reentry Licensing Requirements Final Rule. The paper may be useful to countries that are considering new national frameworks for

commercial space transportation, including hosting U.S. vehicles in their country that would be licensed by the FAA.