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AIAA Support to Space Situational Awareness Policy

Stephen Lee⁽¹⁾

*⁽¹⁾American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, 12700 Sunrise Valley Drive,
Suite 200, Reston, VA 20191-5807, 571 239 0563, stevel@aiaa.org*

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ABSTRACT

The AIAA Space Traffic Coordination Task Force (STCTF) of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) formed in 2021 to support to US Space Situational Awareness policy with technical consultation and policy advocacy. STCTF first convened under the name 'Space Traffic Management Task Force', with the initial remit of advocacy for the stand-up and authorization of the Office of Space Commerce (OSC) in the Department of Commerce, so as to promote and maintain US leadership in the commercial space sector with a functional civil SSA capability and a single point of authoritative contact for US civil space matters in international fora. STCTF deliberately formed with a variety of representatives from subset of the space community, including former NASA, OSC, and Department of State officials; space industry association leaders; and notably, representatives from such adjacent enabling industries as insurance and finance. STCTF and senior AIAA leaders conducted a campaign of briefing and education on SSA and space debris matters with policymakers over a yearlong period to advance these objectives, which contributed to Congress' appropriation and authorization of initial SSA operations at OSC. STCTF has also spearheaded publication of AIAA's Orbital Safety Best Practices white paper, possibly pointing the way to informal establishment of norms as a precursor to or substitute for formal standard setting and enforcement. STCTF continues its efforts, having assisted in OSC in outreach to satellite industry and SSA providers in 2023, and looks forward to continuing its advocacy and education efforts regarding further OSC mission authorization capabilities and the related issues surrounding orbital debris prevention and mitigation.