



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives
Representative Justin Wilmeth (R-2)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Wednesday, October 21, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rep. Justin Wilmeth Pushes to Expand Arizona's Commercial Space Industry

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – State Representative Justin Wilmeth, Chairman of the House Artificial Intelligence & Innovation Committee, is calling for Arizona to expand its role in the commercial space industry following Wednesday's Arizona Space Commission hearing.

Representative Wilmeth has championed legislation to strengthen the Commission's work, including establishing a deadline for its statewide strategic plan. The Commission brings together leaders from industry, academia, and government to identify opportunities and recommend policies to expand Arizona's space sector. Its draft five-year plan calls for targeted incentives, business-friendly policies, and infrastructure improvements that could help shape legislative priorities in 2027.

Arizona already has a substantial commercial space industry. Northrop Grumman manufactures satellites in Gilbert, Tempe-based KinetX Aerospace has helped navigate NASA missions to Pluto and distant asteroids, and Tucson-based Paragon Space Development builds spacecraft life-support systems. Phantom Space, also based in Tucson, is developing rockets and satellite technology for the commercial launch market.

Arizona universities have also played major roles in space exploration. The University of Arizona led NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission, which returned samples from asteroid Bennu to Earth, while Arizona State University leads NASA's Psyche asteroid mission and the camera investigation aboard the Perseverance Mars rover. The state's astronomy heritage includes Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, the world's first International Dark Sky City.

The Commission's draft plan also identifies opportunities for commercial spaceport development in Yuma and Sierra Vista. Both communities are pursuing projects that could expand Arizona's role in space testing, launch, reentry, and related commercial operations.

"Arizona has spent decades helping America explore space. Now I want us to lead in the growing commercial space industry," said Representative Wilmeth. **"We already have companies building satellites, developing rockets, and helping NASA carry out missions across the solar system. I've made this a priority in the Legislature because I want more of those businesses and jobs here in Arizona. Yuma and Sierra Vista are working toward commercial spaceports, and there's tremendous potential across the state. We need to make sure our laws and infrastructure encourage that growth and give companies a reason to invest here."**

Wednesday's hearing also addressed Arizona's bid to host the proposed U.S. Space Academy, with the state's response due November 16. The Commission's strategic plan is due to the Governor and Legislature by December 31.

Justin Wilmeth is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 2 in North Phoenix and is Chairman of the House Committee on Artificial Intelligence & Innovation. Follow him on X at @JustinWilmethAZ.

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