

Space Debris: An Environmental Hazard

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Abstract : Space law refers to all legal provisions that may regulate or apply to space travel, as well as to space-related activity. Although there is undoubtedly a core corpus of "space law," rather than designating a conceptually distinct single kind of law, the phrase can be seen as a label applied to a bucket that includes a variety of different laws and regulations. Similar to 'family law' or 'environmental law' "space law" refers to a variety of laws that are identified by the subject matter they address rather than by the logical extension of a single legal concept. The word "space law" refers to the Law of Space, which can cover anything from the specifics of an insurance agreement for a specific space launch to the most general guidelines that direct state behaviour in space. Space debris, often referred to as space junk, space pollution, space waste, space trash, or space garbage, is a term used to describe abandoned human-made objects in space, primarily in Earth orbit. These include disused spacecraft, discarded launch vehicle stages, mission-related detritus, and fragmentation material from the destruction of disused rocket bodies and spacecraft, which is particularly prevalent in Earth orbit. Other types of space debris, besides abandoned human-made objects in orbit, include pieces left over from collisions, erosion, and disintegration, or even paint specks, solidified liquids ejected from spacecraft, and unburned components from solid rocket engines. The initial action of launching or using a spacecraft in near-Earth orbit imposes an external cost on others that is typically not taken into account or fully accounted for in the cost by the launcher or payload owner.

Keywords : space, outer space treaty, geostationary orbit, satellites, spacecrafts

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