To amend title 49, United States Code, to provide certain authority to the National Transportation Safety Board to investigate commercial space transportation accidents, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 6, 2019

Mr. Graves of Louisiana (for himself, Mr. Larsen of Washington, Mr. Graves of Missouri, and Mr. DeFazio) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To amend title 49, United States Code, to provide certain authority to the National Transportation Safety Board to investigate commercial space transportation accidents, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Commercial Space Transportation Safety Act of 2019”.
SEC. 2. GENERAL AUTHORITY OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD.

(a) In General.—Section 1131(a)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E) by striking “and” at the end;

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (F) as subparagraph (G); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following:

“(F) a commercial space transportation accident in which there is—

“(i) a known impact of a commercial launch vehicle, the payload of such vehicle, or any component thereof outside of the hazard area designated for the launch or reentry of such vehicle;

“(ii) a fatality or significant injury of any individual, regardless of whether the individual was on board the commercial launch vehicle at the time of the accident; or

“(iii) substantial damage to property that is not associated with commercial space launch activities and that is not located at the launch site; and”.


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(b) Other Investigative Agencies.—Section 1131(a)(2) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(D) The Board shall seek to enter into a memorandum of understanding with any Government agency with the authority to certify a commercial space transportation operation. Such memoranda shall delineate the conditions under which a commercial space transportation accident that may be investigated by the Board under subparagraph (F) or (G) of paragraph (1) will instead be investigated by the other Government agency. Such memoranda may not preclude the Board’s participation in the other Government agency’s investigation.”.

(e) Savings Provision.—None of the amendments made by subsection (a) shall be construed to limit the authority of the National Transportation Safety Board to investigate any other commercial space transportation accident that, in the judgement of the Board, falls under the authority of the Board under section 1131(a)(1)(G) (as redesignated by this Act).