



Nanosatellites Advisory Committee
Wednesday, September 16, 2015 10:00 a.m.
House Room D, General Assembly Building

Members: Delegate Ken Plum (chair), Delegate Terry Austin, Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn, Senator Mamie Locke, Senator John Watkins

Delegate Ken Plum, chair of the Nanosatellites Advisory Committee, called the meeting to order.

Mary Sandy, Director of the Virginia Space Grant Consortium, reviewed the proposal that she presented at the June, 2015 meeting regarding a small satellites initiative. Industry members commented that small satellites are here to stay, and that there is substantial interest in future missions that will utilize an array of small satellites.

To follow-up on questions from the June, 2015 meeting regarding the economic impact that the small satellite industry will have in the Commonwealth, Scott Tate and Sarah Lyon-Hill with the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development provided an analysis. A copy of their presentation is available on the JCOTS website. They indicated that because small satellites are an emerging industry, there was not a lot of data available so they tried to use analogous clusters.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Delegate Plum said that the issue at hand hinges on funding, not legislation, and that such an initiative would traditionally filter through the executive branch. Senator Watkins said that small satellites were a worthy cause, but that it was still a fledgling industry, and he was unsure how to reconcile the substantial budget request with competing requests to accommodate launch activities at Wallops Island. He said that it would help to see what the Virginia Space Grant Consortium does with the funding it currently receives, and that it would need to justify asking for more funding.

There was general consensus that the legislative members of the advisory committee supported the concept of a small satellite initiative, but that it could not support the concrete proposal and the budget amendment that it would require. The advisory committee recommended referring the issue to the Aerospace Advisory Council, an executive branch agency, for further review.