



The Balance Group
8070 Georgia Avenue, Suite 301
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Office: 202-223-1028
www.TheBalanceGroup.Net

BALANCE GROUP: STATEMENT ON GAO REPORT ON LARGE SATELLITE CONSTELLATIONS

November 2, 2022- Today the United States Government Accountability Office Published: *Satellite Licensing: FCC Should Reexamine Its Environmental Review Process for Large Constellations of Satellites*

The BALANCE GROUP congratulates the GAO and the FCC on agreeing with the need for large satellite constellation licensing, deployment and operational decisions to be much more thoroughly examined, reviewed and monitored for environmental safety. One key GAO report conclusion summarizes the recommended direction:

GAO is recommending that FCC (1) review and document whether licensing large constellations of satellites normally does not have significant effects on the environment, (2) establish a timeframe and process for a periodic review of its categorical exclusion under NEPA, and publish both on its website, and (3) identify and make public factors FCC considers when determining if an extraordinary circumstance is present. FCC agreed with our recommendations.

On May 26, 2020, The BALANCE GROUP started publishing detailed recommendations for requiring that federal agencies with expertise in human health, environmental safety, and national defense matters be much more closely consulted prior to the FCC deciding to license satellite mega constellations. See: [attachment 1 balance group opposition and motions to spacex application for major modification v final may 27 2020 1 .pdf \(thebalancegroup.net\)](https://www.thebalancegroup.net/attachment_1_balance_group_opposition_and_motions_to_spacex_application_for_major_modification_v_final_may_27_2020_1.pdf)

It is important to note that on February 9, 2022, the world awoke to front page news that over 40 newly launched SpaceX satellites had been knocked out of orbit due to a predictable and routine solar flare. The SpaceX low earth orbit satellite mega-constellation network had only started deploying. Yet at least over 10% of what had just been deployed was tumbling out of orbit.¹

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) previously authorized SpaceX to deploy a network larger than all the satellites ever launched in the history of humankind.

The National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) requires environmental review before major federal actions. Federal agencies are required by NEPA to issue “a detailed statement” about any environmental impact related to any “major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.” Today’s report should lead to a much more balanced and scholarly real-world understanding concerning environmental impacts related to large satellite constellations.

The BALANCE GROUP exists to provide a balanced approach to solving large, systemic issues concerning existing and proposed man-made systems and their impact on the human condition and the environment at large. Technology and large-scale networks provide certain benefits that we all rely upon, yet the same existing or proposed networks and systems can degrade the human condition and surrounding environment. The BALANCE GROUP will continue to provide a forum for its members and the public-at-large to conduct balanced research and advocacy for respecting the need for technology while also improving the human and environmental condition.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/09/science/spacex-satellites-storm.html>