



**Senate Finance Hearing on SB1 - Article I - General Government -
Office of the Governor and Trusteed Programs within the Office of the Governor
January 30, 2025 Testimony**

Thank you, Chair Huffman and Vice Chair Hinojosa. My name is Mitrah Avini and I'm a policy advisor at Texas 2036. I'm here today to talk about the Texas Space Commission.

As you're aware, \$150 Million was appropriated last session to fund grants from the **Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund** (also called the SEARF grants). The intent was for these grants to help grow and advance the space industry in Texas.

Since September, over 284 grant applications have been received by the Texas Space Commission, totaling over \$3 billion in funding requests. Just last week, the Commission's board of directors approved the first batch of grant awards, and the board will consider awarding more grants again on Feb. 10th and 28th.

Given the wide gulf between available grant funding and the overwhelming interest the Commission has received, Texas 2036 respectfully requests that the Legislature make another appropriation to the SEARF grant program. This will allow for the Texas Space Commission to continue supporting the space ecosystem in the upcoming biennium.

With a growing concern for national security and homeland defense needs, the commercial space industry in Texas continues to prove their value in partnering with NASA and DOD programs. There are many small- and medium-size private companies in Texas that are working on technologies included in payloads that are launched from Texas, such as SpaceX and Blue Origin. So, I'd like to thank you for your interest and support to keep Texas competitive in the latest race for space. I would be happy to answer any questions.