

FAA appears to be attempting to expand its authority to moon activities

February 6 2015, by Bob Yirka



The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has caused a bit of stir by hinting that it plans to expand its authority to include exploration of the moon and the use of its resources. News agency Reuters has reported that it has obtained a copy of a letter composed by officials with the agency and sent to U.S. based Bigelow Airspace—in it, the agency said it plans to leverage its launching authority by adding licensing authority of moon assets—all to encourage private companies to invest in such activities. The reason such a move has caused a stir, of course, is because it appears that the U.S. agency is attempting to expand its oversight into an area where it does not have the authority to do so.

No one owns the moon or any part of it, which makes it ripe for the taking. A similar scenario is taking place in parts of the northern hemisphere as global warming reveals new unclaimed territory. In years past, land grabs generally resulted in the spoils going to those who came first—and then fought off those that tried to take it away from them. To prevent such a scenario unfolding in a new more civilized world, the United Nations passed an Outer Space treaty back in 1967, which among other things, stipulates that no one country can claim sovereignty over any part of the moon. It also lays out rules for activities on the moon—private entities that go there, for example, must be authorized and supervised by countries belonging to the UN.

George Nield, author of the letter, in responding to criticism regarding its intent, claimed that the wording does not imply that the agency is attempting to license [moon landings](#)—the agency, he said, was merely trying to reassure Bigelow that it would do its best to protect the company's assets once they are on the moon. Unfortunately, others do not see it that way. While it is clear that new rules need to be written and agreed to by worldwide consensus, an American agency striking out on its own seems to be a push by the U.S. government to tighten its grip on celestial assets—Reuters claims the letter was coordinated by several agencies, not just the FAA, which included NASA, Commerce and the

departments of State and Defense.

Regardless of intent, it is likely the letter will cause some in the U.N. or other multi-national organizations to speed up the process of figuring out how to settle land claims and/or disputes on the [moon](#) or other celestial bodies, before it becomes necessary to settle things the old-fashioned way.

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