Orbital Range Infrastructure vs. Factory Grants: Why Coastal Launch States Spend Differently

Pillar: Competitor States | **Basis:** Spaceport vs. Inland Economics | **Primary Source:** Space Florida / TX / WA Records | **As Of:** Verified Nov 16, 2026

Florida and Texas anchor large state space budgets on orbital launch ranges, pad utilities, and payload-processing facilities that Washington's geography cannot host; Washington's competitive arena is therefore engineering, satellite manufacturing, propulsion, and component supply chains.

Documented Policy & Site-Selection Record

• Range-Coupled Capital: Space Florida's Spaceport Improvement Program funds launch pads, propellant farms, and payload-processing hangars physically tied to Cape Canaveral and KSC.

• Why Washington Cannot Compete on Launch Pads: Washington lacks an eastern/southern coastal orbital range with clear downrange overflight corridors.

• Where Washington Actually Competes: Satellite manufacturing (>68% of active satellites, preliminary BERK 2026), propulsion engineering, orbital compute, and avionics/components.

• Policy Implication: Copying Florida's pad subsidies makes little sense in Washington; the competitive battleground is R&D tax treatment, industrial land/floodplain continuity, and factory-scale grants.

Coastal Launch-State Spending vs. Washington's Competitive Arena

Asset / Subsidy Class	Coastal States (FL / TX)	Washington State Reality
Orbital Launch Pads & Ranges	Cape Canaveral, KSC, Boca Chica	None; static/suborbital test only (Moses Lake)
State Infrastructure Focus	SIP pad & payload-processing co-investment	SR 167 / Port / Levee & utility continuity
Manufacturing & Engineering	Growing via state grants & range proximity	67 core firms; >68% active satellites (preliminary)

Founder, Staffer & Site-Selector Takeaways

• Staffer Takeaway: Designing Washington incentives around launch pads misses the cluster's actual center of gravity in satellites, propulsion R&D, and orbital systems.

• Founder Takeaway: Expect to keep launch pad capex in Florida/California/Texas while evaluating Washington for high-density engineering and satellite assembly.

Cross-Cluster Links & Primary Sources

• **WA Space Cluster Hub (#1382):** https://bcesg.org/washington-space-cluster-census/

• **WA Space Launch Segment Overview:** https://bcesg.org/wa-space-launch-segment-overview/

• **Launch Segment Production & Moses Lake Test:** https://bcesg.org/wa-space-launch-testing-production-footprint/

• **Moses Lake Test Corridor (MWH):** https://bcesg.org/wa-space-hardware-moses-lake-test-corridor-mwh/

• **Green River Valley Floodplain Overview:** https://bcesg.org/wa-space-valley-green-river-floodplain-overview/

• **Space Florida (Spaceport Improvement Program):** https://www.spaceflorida.gov/

• **Texas Space Commission (Office of the Governor):** https://gov.texas.gov/organization/texas-space-commission

• **WSDOT Puget Sound Gateway Program:**
https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/major-projects/puget-sound-gateway-program

Provenance Note: Structural comparison of coastal range co-investment vs. inland manufacturing incentives. Non-advocacy brief.