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October 15, 2009**

**Statement of Elizabeth (Beth) Robinson
Nominee to be Chief Financial Officer, National Aeronautics and Space
Administration**

**Before the
Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee
United States Senate**

October 15, 2009

Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Hutchison, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as you consider my nomination for the position of Chief Financial Officer at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). It is an honor to be here. I also appreciate the time Members of this Committee already have taken to meet with me, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee to address the challenges of maintaining the Nation's critical efforts to pioneer space science, technology, and exploration and aeronautics, while also undertaking key research programs to advance our knowledge and understanding of our own planet.

I am privileged to have been nominated by the President to this post, more so, because, in many ways, being confirmed for this position would be like "coming home" for me. After growing up in Seattle, Washington, studying at the University of Washington, graduating from Reed College, and earning a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute for Technology, I started my career as a geophysicist, working with NASA data. I eventually joined the staff of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology, where I worked for Chairman George E. Brown of California. Congressman Brown was a very wise man and someone that I am very glad I came to know well before his untimely death. He loved science, and he loved NASA. And he was just thrilled every time he heard of a significant new NASA discovery. His boundless optimism about the future of the Nation and its scientific underpinnings has remained with me to this day, as I am honored to be considered for the position of NASA Chief Financial Officer.

If confirmed, I would commit to improving NASA's strategic planning, budget and financial performance to make that future vision more robust and attainable. Working with Administrator Bolden, Deputy Administrator Garver, NASA's dedicated professionals, Congress, the White House, the private sector, and other key constituencies, I would strive to meet the President's and Nation's objectives for NASA, while undertaking the mission in the

most effective and efficient manner possible, especially during a time when there are other competing demands for our Nation's resources.

The position of Chief Financial Officer in any organization carries a tremendous responsibility as the pivotal point where budget, accountability, evaluation, and sound fiscal management all reside. Moreover, NASA has faced challenges in the performance of its financial and project management functions that must be addressed as quickly as possible. If confirmed, I would build upon the progress that NASA has already made, while continuing to improve the management, performance, and results for the Agency.

Over my career, I am fortunate to have gained broad experience in strategic planning, budget, financial management and leadership. At the Office of Management and Budget, I enjoyed a unique perspective from which to learn about, and participate in, the planning, budget, financial and evaluation process of the Federal government. At the House Science Committee and congressional Office of Technology Assessment, I gained valuable expertise in research and development workforce issues, project planning and execution, and program oversight, and, more importantly, how to work with the Congress on those issues. My executive experience in several agencies also has provided direct experience in the leadership of complex organizations. If I am confirmed, I would bring to NASA broad experience within budget, finance and general management, as well as particular experience in coordinating the President's Budget and related products.

If confirmed, I would make it a priority to work closely with NASA leadership and each of the constituencies with which NASA's CFO organization interfaces to understand the current key challenges which NASA and its CFO organization face. I would work with the CFO staff to focus appropriate attention and resources to ensure Agency success in meeting these challenges. I would also make it a priority to work with the staff to support Agency efforts to achieve unqualified audit opinions and be a first-class management organization.

I believe public service is a duty, a privilege and an honor. I have served as a career staff member for over 20 years in the Executive and Legislative branches of government, and I believe in the importance of creative and tenacious leaders in the Nation's government agencies. I am enthusiastic about the opportunity, if confirmed, to address the challenges of the position NASA Chief Financial Officer and to bring my budget, financial and leadership experience into the service of NASA and the Federal government.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I thank you, again, for your consideration of my nomination, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.