OPENING STATEMENT

Welcome everyone to our hearing of the U.S. Senate Space and Science Subcommittee. Thank you to each of our witnesses for their participation today, to subcommittee Ranking Member Schmitt for working with me on these issues, and to Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz for their collaboration.

Today's hearing comes at a critical time for the commercial space industry. Bold, flexible, bipartisan policies have fostered U.S. commercial space from its infancy to the world's gold standard of today.

It is not a coincidence that the United States is both the only country where private companies are engaged in human spaceflight and the world leader in space innovation and development. Continued American leadership depends on a robust private sector.

Space innovation is no longer the exclusive domain of government. As private companies bring private citizens to space, we can see the immense potential of commercial human spaceflight. Commercial space activities can now go from theoretical to very real at lightning speed.

Commercial space companies right now employ thousands of Americans, have nationwide supply chains, and leverage the already immense economic impact of government space operations. America's private space efforts are all the more critical with increasing global investments in space, including from foreign competitors and adversaries like Russia and China.

My home state of Arizona continues its space leadership with significant commercial space investment. Virgin Galactic's massive manufacturing complex in Mesa is set to be operational next year.

I am looking forward to seeing the new Delta fleet roll out in time for 2025 flight testing. That means meaningful careers for Arizonans and a tremendous boost to the local economy.

Earlier this year, Blue Origin opened a 43,000-square foot office in Phoenix, taking advantage of the region's excellent engineering talent to further its avionics, systems engineering, and supply chain management. And I am sure the breathtaking mountain views don't hurt either. Along with hundreds of employees, Blue Origin is also investing hundreds of millions of dollars in local Arizona firms to support all of its programs, including commercial human spaceflight.

These investments follow recent large-scale expansions of existing facilities by Northrop Gruman and Boeing. My alma mater Arizona State University – Forks Up! – launched NewSpace, an unprecedented collaboration effort integrating academic and commercial space enterprises.

SpaceX may not *yet* have Arizona facilities, but it did successfully launch the ASU-led Psyche spacecraft on one of its Falcon Heavy rockets last Friday. And all of this investment benefits from public space projects: in Arizona alone NASA accounted for over 700 million dollars and over three thousand eight hundred jobs in 2021.

Progress in commercial space finds us at the dawn of a new space age. Much of the industry – particularly commercial human spaceflight – is just now entering phases of rapid development. Commercial human

spaceflights did not become a regular occurrence until the past few years.

I’m glad to have all three private companies currently flying humans into space here today so we can hear how the government can help boost and safeguard their operations.

Congress finds itself with a unique opportunity to help grow an industry with vast potential and an important responsibility to do so carefully. We must maintain U.S. leadership by ensuring our space industry retains the freedom to innovate without compromising safety.

We must draw upon prior experience and take the same enterprising, pioneering approach to commercial space that served us so well in earlier generations. We need to streamline authorization processes, enact a workable safety framework for in-space operations, and clearly

define proper responsibilities for government agencies in commercial space.

I believe this requires a flexible regulatory environment able to attack the issues of today head-on without compromising adaptability to the issues of tomorrow. We must address the learning period, mission authorization, and other pressing matters in a way that looks ahead to a future with unknown capabilities.

To do this we need to account for the diversity of operations in commercial space and the human spaceflight industry. Our three industry representatives today show how there is no singular approach to human spaceflight. Laws and regulations must account for diversity without sacrificing efficiency.

To maintain our leadership and competitiveness in the growing commercial space economy, we will also need a strong workforce to support it.

I am passionate about making sure Americans and Arizonans have rewarding careers to choose from when graduating either from a certificate program, vocational school, or with advanced degrees. Encouraging public-private partnerships and leveraging existing expertise of entities like NASA will be critical.

Regulators must also be given proper resources to keep pace with growing industry. We cannot expect any regulatory framework to function without the necessary expertise to oversee such a complex industry.

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