

## Q&A with Witnesses:

**Cantwell:** Now we're going to turn to questions and obviously if the witnesses could help us out here a little bit since there's three of you. Senator Nelson, I wanted to start with you. Obviously, NASA has a big tradition of ensuring resiliency and commercial programs by using multiple competitors and maintaining what's called dissimilar redundancy. So I want to know that you will commit to rapidly providing Congress with a plan for assuring that kind of resiliency, out of the Human Lander program.

**The Hon. Bill Nelson:** I do.

**Cantwell:** Thank you.

**Nelson:** Competition is always good.

**Cantwell:** Thank you. And on the workforce issue, Artemus is a great mission. Now there are 18 astronauts that are going to be competing for that. There are a few from the State of Washington, we're very proud of them. But I think importantly, it shows that in 2019, women only made up 1/3 of NASA's workforce and 16% of the senior scientific workforce. If confirmed, will you promote diversity of roles for women in technical and leadership roles throughout NASA?

**Nelson:** Yes ma'am, and already have, and I strongly recommended to the White House that the Deputy be a woman who is exceptionally qualified and, indeed, I think you will see that in the person that was announced last week, Pam Melroy, a former astronaut commander. Before that, she was an Air Force Colonel test pilot. After NASA she went to the FAA, and then to DARPA, and so she is an incredibly prepared person, as well as being a delightful person. And she and I will operate as a team.

Although the White House hasn't announced yet, they are, I think, looking at the third person in NASA, and you only, Senate, confirm three, the Chief Financial Officer, and I believe that they are looking at whom we have recommended, also a woman.

**Cantwell:** Thank you. Miss Kahn, one of the things that the committee as Ranking Member we did was issue a report on journalism, and the market impacts that local journalism has faced in the transformation to the Information Age. Google and Facebook play dominant roles as portals to news and media. I think you probably understand the challenges that these sectors have faced, given this level of activity. Do you think that the FTC should review Google and Facebook's use of journalistic content without compensation under the unfair--the unfairness standard that the FTC has?

**Ms. Lina Khan:** Thank you. Thank you, Senator. Congratulations to you and your staff for such an incisive report. I think you know everything needs to be on the table. Obviously local journalism is in crisis, and I think the current COVID moment has really underscored the deep, democratic emergency that is resulting when we don't have reliable sources of local news. So absolutely, you know, this would be something that I would hope to focus on at the Commission.

**Cantwell:** What uncompetitive practices do you see going on?

**Khan:** So I think there are two major factors, one of which is the fact that you know, increasingly, news publishers are dependent on a few gatekeepers to disseminate their news, and to disseminate their information, and so a single change in an algorithm can plummet readership and subscriptions for any

publisher. And so I think there are some concerns generally there about arbitrary whims and the arbitrary power that these firms can exercise. I think there are also serious concerns about concentration within the digital ad market, as well as vertical integration that has potentially created some conflicts of interest. Some of the lawsuits that were filed last year I think underscore these issues, as well as potential criminal activity as well. So I think it will be important to continue seeing how those lawsuits play out as well.

**Cantwell:** Thank you. Well, we're going to continue our work here because we think, you know, we believe in the model that our markets, our economy, needs perfect information. That's what basically generates true data. But if you think that markets need perfect information, well, if you have such a decline in journalism, you're not going to get perfect information. So we definitely want a diversity of voices and FOIA's and holding people accountable and all of those things. So thank you.

Miss Kiernan, one of the key challenges that we face when we're dealing with NOAA and/or other aspects of Commerce's responsibilities given to the organization and timely allocation of those resources--so I could say for example tribal broadband money, or NOAA disaster commercial assistance. Will you commit to making sure the agency works closely with all of us on timely distribution of resources, obviously, accurate distribution but timely, because so many of these represent very small entities who are counting on these resources?

**Ms. Leslie Kiernan:** Yes, Senator, absolutely.

**Cantwell:** And will you commit--I mentioned in the beginning about the scientific integrity in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, the Inspector General for the Department of Commerce found that the former Acting General Counsel interfered with science, even going as far to draft public statements rebuking career scientists at the National Weather Service. If confirmed, will you ensure that the Office of--your General Counsel Office always follows science?

**Kiernan:** Yes, Senator.

**Cantwell:** Thank you. Senator Wicker.