

**Testimony of Colonel Pamela Melroy (USAF, ret.)
Nominee for Deputy Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
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Thank you Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and members of the committee. It is my honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for Deputy Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

When most Americans think of NASA, they think first of space exploration, and their own personal experiences watching an astronaut land on the Moon, a rocket launch, or, like we saw a few months ago, a rover touchdown on Mars. The recent first powered flight on another planet was followed closely by millions. More than any other government endeavor, NASA inspires and unites this nation. And with the tremendous bipartisan support of the Congress, NASA and its incredible workforce is ready to tackle our nation's most pressing challenges – economic competitiveness, climate change, and maintaining American leadership in science and technology.

I have worked in aerospace for my entire career and have experience in each of NASA's four mission areas – aeronautics, space technology, human spaceflight, and science. I have a deep understanding of how the agency operates, and, if confirmed, I am ready to help Senator Nelson lead and manage NASA on day one.

I served for 22 years as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force, including serving in Desert Shield/Desert Storm and as a test pilot. While in the Air Force I was selected as a NASA astronaut. I spent 38 days in space over three Space Shuttle missions, serving as the mission commander on my final spaceflight in 2007. My experience in space gave me extensive knowledge of the operations of the International Space Station and the rigors and complexity of human spaceflight. I also handled numerous special assignments including Deputy Project manager of the *Columbia* Crew Survival Investigation. These roles honed my leadership skills and fostered an acute understanding of the role NASA leadership plays, and the difficult decisions they face balancing bold exploration and safety.

After leaving NASA, I worked in the space industry before returning to public service at the FAA's Office of Commercial Spaceflight. This experience provided me a unique insight into the growing commercial space industry, which NASA increasingly partners with to execute missions. Following that, I worked at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) as the Deputy Director of the Tactical Technology Office, which directs and oversees a large portfolio of space and aeronautics development projects.

NASA does not operate in a vacuum, especially with the significant activities occurring in commercial space. If confirmed as Deputy, I would be committed to ensuring that NASA is coordinated with the other government agencies in advancing space policy. In my previous role at the FAA, I was responsible for oversight of commercial spaceflight licensed and permitted activities, including NASA's Commercial Resupply Services and Commercial Crew programs.

This experience provided me with a unique insight and understanding of how NASA, the FAA, and the commercial space industry work together.

In a similar vein, my experience at DARPA exposed me to how NASA, the DoD, and industry work together to develop next generation technologies. If confirmed as Deputy Administrator, I would have the opportunity to utilize my understanding of these agencies to help foster synergies and maintain American leadership in space and aeronautics.

For America to continue to lead the world in space, it must do so in a way that inspires and benefits all Americans. If confirmed as Deputy Administrator, I would be committed to ensuring that there are fair and inclusive processes within the agency and in our partnerships. We are privileged to live in a country with an incredible diversity of thought and experience, and that is one of our greatest strengths. Senator Nelson and I are both deeply committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion at NASA. We also support the role of NASA in STEM education, supporting our great nation's next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers.

NASA is unique because its programs are awe-inspiring and have the potential to fundamentally change humanity's understanding of the universe. NASA's role is collecting data about the Earth system and understanding the effects of climate change will be essential to those tasked with determining policy. If confirmed as Deputy Administrator, I will work closely with NOAA and ensure a robust program of Earth data collection and dissemination.

However, it is still essential to have the right insight and oversight of these programs. I am a firm believer in accountability for taxpayers' dollars as if they were my own. Executing NASA's missions in a cost-effective way helps America achieve the most aspirational goals in a safe and fiscally responsible way. My program management experience in industry and at DARPA, where I was responsible for more than \$500 million per year in advanced projects spanning space, air, ground, and maritime domains, will be highly relevant. Good financial and risk management is the linchpin of success. If confirmed, I look forward to bringing these experiences to NASA.

I am incredibly passionate about NASA and its mission. If confirmed, I would be honored to support the Administrator, execute on the administration's priorities, guiding the next generation, and working with Congress on the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.