February 10, 2020

General John W. Raymond
Commander
United States Space Command
150 Vandenberg Street, Suite 1105
Peterson AFB, CO 80914

General Raymond:

As you work to establish the newly formed United States Space Force, our delegation urges you to fully incorporate and leverage New Mexico's existing public and private sector space capabilities. A recent Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) and Air Force Research Lab (AFRL) study concluded, "continued robust development of U.S. civil, commercial and military space activities requires a resilient, domestic, manufacturing and defense industrial base supported by a trusted and responsive supply chain." New Mexico is at the forefront of developing this infrastructure - ready to support a virtuous cycle of space development and operational support through its existing space capabilities and expertise.

New Mexico's focus on research and development, through organizations such as the Air Force Research Lab and the Space Rapid Capabilities Office (Space RCO) at Kirtland Air Force Base, is already at the vanguard of developing and leveraging entrepreneurial space businesses. Using tools such as the Other Transaction Authorities, the Space RCO and others have been able to cut through levels of red tape that have historically increased the cost of access to orbit.

As numerous officials have pointed out, you and your team are working to build and create a new service to protect our national security during a period of rapid technology development and competition from near-peer competitors. Achieving the vision mandated by Congress requires maintaining a clear advantage in space technology, which New Mexico is currently developing. New Mexico's private sector industry leaders, including nascent launch companies, are ready to realize the goals envisioned by fast space proponents. This includes, critical capabilities highlighted in the 2016 Air University Study, such as "sortie-on-demand launch capability, made possible through economically viable business cases, high launch rates, sustainably lower costs, rapid turn-around, and higher reliability from emerging approaches."

Ensuring that the United States is able to secure our national interests in space will not only require support for legacy launch capabilities for heavy lift from the coasts, but also the development of new capabilities for small and rapid launch, including the creation of inland launch corridors. Every near-peer U.S. space adversary is rapidly developing inland launch capability to ensure access to space, but the United States is falling behind. In both the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act and Defense Appropriations Act, Congress included language to enhance infrastructure and improve support activities for the processing and launch of Department of Defense small-class and medium-class payloads, and to conduct a feasibility study regarding the establishment of a future inland spaceport for space launch and hypersonic testing. Given our interest in this issue, we respectfully request you work with our staff to schedule a briefing on progress toward these requirements as soon as possible.

We also urge you and other Space Force leaders to look to the state of New Mexico's sustained space leadership to continue developing new technologies, doctrine, and operating talent for our nation's critical space assets. New Mexico is already home to many of the nation's core space assets, many listed below, and stands ready to leverage those assets in support of the United States Space Force:

- Space and Missile Systems Center's Advanced Systems and Development Directorate;
- Air Force Research Laboratory's Space Vehicles Directorate;
- Space Rapid Capabilities Office;
- Space Test Program - the executive agent for all DoD R&D experiments;
- Aerospace Corporation's Albuquerque headquarters;
- Spaceport America, a Federal Aviation Administration licensed spaceport with inland launch and potential point-to-point transportation from orbit;
- White Sands Missile Range, the largest overland testing facility in the United States;
- Air Force Starfire Optical Range;
- The Ground-Based Electro-Optical Deep Space Surveillance New Mexico site near Socorro, N.M which currently reports to the 18th Space Surveillance Squadron;
- NRO Aerospace Data Facility-Southwest;
- NASA Johnson Space Center (JSC) at White Sands Test Facility;
- Air Force Research Laboratory Tech Engagement Office;
- Mission capacity in the New Mexico National Guard;
- New Space New Mexico, supporting large and small private space industry leaders throughout the state;
- Sandia Science and Technology Park and Innovate ABQ, technology communities in Albuquerque supporting regional startups and Fortune 500 companies;
- New Mexico Tech's Magdalena Ridge Observatory, an asset under construction that can be utilized for orbital and deep space situational awareness;
- Two National Nuclear Security Administration laboratories; and
- The Las Cruces Space Festival and Spaceport America Cup, working to develop the next generation space leaders and culture of space excellence in New Mexico.

The Space RCO, in particular, provides the Department with a tremendous opportunity to utilize the office's unique acquisition authorities to develop and transition space systems quickly towards a more disaggregated space architecture. We understand that the Space RCO has requested military construction funding in the FY20 and FY21 budget cycles to increase the size and capacity of the organization's classified office space – we ask that you prioritize this project to ensure the Space RCO is able to continue delivering needed capabilities.

We stand ready to work with you and your team as you develop the culture, doctrine, and industrial base to continue our nation's leadership role in space and protect key assets above the Karman line. The state of New Mexico was witness to the birth of the rocket age when Dr. Robert H. Goddard first experimented in our high deserts. Our state is apt and eager to continue serving a critical role in the development of the new space economy and its relationship with the emerging Space Force.

Sincerely,

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor, New Mexico

Ben Ray Luján
United States Representative

Deb A. Haaland
United States Representative

Xochitl Torres Small
United States Representative

CC:

Hon. Mark Esper
Secretary of Defense

Hon. Barbara Barrett
Secretary of the United States Air Force