SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION:
QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

HEARING ON
U.S. HUMAN EXPLORATION GOALS AND COMMERCIAL SPACE COMPETITIVENESS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2015

Response to Written Questions Submitted by Hon. Roy Blunt to Mr. John Elbon, Boeing Space Exploration

Question 1. Former NASA Former NASA deputy administrator Lori Garver has made multiple public statements that the Space Launch System is "wasteful and old technology," and that it and Orion should be cancelled. One of her quotes was, "Would you really go to Mars with technology that's 50 years old? That's not what innovation and our space exploration should be all about." This statement is concerning coming from a former NASA deputy administrator.

Can you comment on her statement? Are we spending tax dollars on outdated technology?

Answer. The referenced statements by former NASA Deputy Administrator Lori Garver are both misguided and inaccurate.

The claim that SLS and Orion technologies are outdated is a agreat misrepresentation. These systems are being developed to transport astronauts further into the solar system than ever before imagined. It is incomprehensible that the NASA and contractor teams, with a well-known reputation to ensure astronaut safety, would compromise this core value by not fielding the most technically advanced systems.

While these systems have ties and resemble heritage systems, the employed technologies are state of the art. Where applicable, heritage system designs are being updated with advanced design practices, materials, manufacturing processes, computer controls. These programs represent the cutting edge in human space transportation.

Question 2. Ms. Garver also said SLS and Orion are jobs programs in Congressional members' states and districts - specifically Texas, Florida, Colorado and Alabama.

Can you discuss the number of companies and suppliers involved in SLS and Orion, and how many states play a role?

Answer. The SLS and Orion programs have more than 2,000 suppliers in 48 states. This supplier network was developed through competitive procurements and each supplier bringing unique technical capabilities at the component level. The attention to detail at this level in turn enables a highly reliable human space transportation capability.