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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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November 29, 2021

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Madam Vice President:

We applaud the National Space Council's recent announcement that it will convene the first meeting under your leadership on December 1st, 2021. The National Space Council plays a critical role in coordinating interagency objectives in space and stimulating dialogue on national space policy development across the civil, commercial, and international security portfolios.

The space domain is essential for the United States' modern economy. From fostering scientific discovery and planetary exploration to facilitating next-generation communications and the Global Positioning System (GPS), these scientific, technological, and national security benefits must be protected. Regrettably, the Russian Federation recently carried out an anti-satellite weapon test that created over 1,500 new pieces of trackable orbital debris and recklessly threatened the safety and sustainability of low-Earth orbit (LEO). It also endangered American astronauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS) and put the thousands of satellites currently in-orbit today at severe risk of becoming victims to the Kessler syndrome.

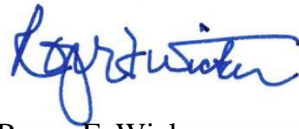
This recent debris-generating catastrophe raises concerns about maintaining the long-term sustainability of the space environment. We request that, at the upcoming National Space Council meeting, you advocate for aligning space sustainability priorities and activities across the Federal Government and work to develop international dialogue on norms of responsible behavior in space.

The National Space Council's first meeting comes at a time of great importance for the future of exploration, discovery, and sustainability in space. We appreciate your attention to this request, and we look forward to working with the Council on maintaining global leadership in the next frontier.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
Chair



Roger F. Wicker
Ranking Member



John Hickenlooper
U.S. Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
U.S. Senator

cc: Chirag Parikh, Executive Director, National Space Council