

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

*Full Committee  
Nomination Hearing  
May 1, 2025*

**DEMOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD**

*Mr. Paul Dabbar*

**COVER PAGE**

**SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL (D-WA)**

**Secretary Lutnick's stewardship of the Department of Commerce (DOC, Department, Commerce)**

As I mentioned in my opening statement, the Commerce Department has been in a state of chaos and disruption since Secretary Lutnick's confirmation. Not only is the Secretary failing to honor commitments he made to this Committee; I believe he is also failing to focus on the Department's core mission and workforce.

According to recent press reports, Secretary Lutnick is spending much of his time these days at the White House—not the Commerce Department. And by all accounts, he is focused primarily on playing defense for the Administration's disastrous tariffs agenda—not on the Department's essential programs.

If confirmed as the Deputy Secretary, it would be our expectation that you would come in and help right this ship swiftly.

1. Yes or no: If confirmed, will you commit to spend the majority of your time at the Commerce Department working on the programs and policies that fall squarely in its remit?

*Answer:*

I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick in support of his and the Administration's tireless efforts to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity for all Americans.

2. Yes or no: Will you honor the commitments you make to Congress?

*Answer:*

Yes.

**Dismantling the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)**

Under Secretary Lutnick's leadership, the MBDA—a 56-year-old agency that Congress permanently authorized in 2021 with bipartisan legislation—has been dismantled. During his confirmation hearing, Secretary Lutnick told our Committee that he did not support dismantling the MBDA. But, within months of taking office, Secretary Lutnick's Department has gutted the MBDA. And now, the Trump Administration's FY2026 budget proposal acknowledges that the Department has “fully eliminated” the agency unilaterally.

I, along with multiple colleagues on the Committee, have sent two letters to Secretary Lutnick seeking information about his dismantling of the MBDA. In response, the Department sent a woefully inadequate letter that failed to address any of our concerns. On April 30, we sent

another letter to the Department, this time to the acting Undersecretary for MBDA, demanding answers and accountability.

1. Yes or No: Do you agree that funds Congress appropriated for MBDA's statutory mission must be used for that purpose? If not, explain.

*Answer:*

If granted the privilege of confirmation, I will promptly look into this matter.

2. Yes or No: If confirmed, will you commit to tracing the money Congress appropriated to the MBDA and reporting back to this Committee on the status of those funds within 30 days? If not, explain.

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will look into this matter.

3. If confirmed, will you examine the precise role held at the Commerce Department by Nate Cavanaugh, who is reportedly a member of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), and promptly provide the Committee a complete description of any such role, including an explanation for why Mr. Cavanaugh signed grant termination notices on behalf of the MBDA?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will look into this matter.

4. If confirmed, will you commit to promptly providing this Committee the appropriate paperwork reflecting Labor Department Deputy Secretary Keith Sonderling's appointment as the acting Undersecretary for MBDA?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will look into this matter.

5. Yes or No: You told my staff you respect congressional authorizations, appropriations, and oversight. Do you support the Trump Administration's full elimination of an agency that Congress statutorily authorized and appropriated funds to operate?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will review and execute on this program as required by law.

6. Yes or No: If confirmed, will you commit to fully responding to my letters and requests on this topic? If no, explain.

*Answer:*

Yes. If confirmed, I will be responsive to the Committee.

### **Tariffs**

Senator Grassley and I recently introduced the Trade Review Act of 2025, a bill that would reassert Congress's constitutional control over tariffs. As we've seen, President Trump has vastly exceeded his legal tariff authority and ushered in economic chaos. This bill would require Congressional approval for tariffs and help dial back Trump's unilateral trade war. Meanwhile, the Trump Administration's start-and-stop approach to tariffs is giving American families and business economic whiplash as we seem to be stumbling into a trade war with no clear end game.

1. Do you agree that Congress has constitutional authority over trade policy, including tariffs?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, including on potential legislation, on efforts to help combat decades of unfair trade practices that have harmed American workers, manufacturers, and critical supply chains.

2. If confirmed, do you expect to play a significant role in formulating the Administration's tariffs policies?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I would work to support Secretary Lutnick, Under Secretary Kessler, and Ambassador Greer in formulating the Administration's tariff policies.

3. Are you aware of whether the Administration intends to use tariffs primarily as a revenue generating tool or for leverage as a negotiating tool? If yes, please detail your basis for this understanding.

*Answer:*

The Administration has made clear that tariffs imposed by President Trump serve multiple strategic purposes, including protecting our national and economic security, combatting large and persistent trade deficits that have harmed American workers,

businesses and communities, and supporting negotiations for more fair and reciprocal trade agreements.

4. How do you plan to assess the impact of current and proposed tariffs on working- and middle-class Americans, especially with respect to essential goods?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that Americans are able to continue to access all of the essential goods they rely on a daily basis and ensure that critical supply chains are not disrupted by an overreliance on foreign manufacturers not subject to American standards of production.

5. Even Secretary Lutnick has acknowledged that tariffs will cause prices to increase for consumers. Given that, do you think retailers should be required to disclose the portion of their list prices reflecting the additional cost from tariffs?

*Answer:*

*No.*

### **Secretary Lutnick's Statements regarding Elon Musk and Tesla**

Mr. Dabbar, serious concerns have been raised regarding Secretary Lutnick's compliance with federal ethics laws. On March 19, 2025, Secretary Lutnick went on national television and urged Americans to "buy Tesla" stock and said anyone who doesn't buy a Tesla robot "is going to be silly."

As I'm sure you know from your prior federal service, federal ethics rules generally prohibit federal officials from using their public office to endorse any product or service.

1. Yes or no: If confirmed, will you pledge not to publicly call for Americans to buy stock in any of Elon Musk's companies? If not, why not?

*Answer:*

*. If confirmed, I will abide by all federal ethics laws and regulations.*

2. Yes or no: Will you commit to fully complying with all federal ethics rules?

*Answer:*

*Yes.*

### **Dismantling the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**

The Trump Administration is pursuing an FY 2026 budget proposal that would reduce NOAA's budget by at least 25 percent, eliminate Congressionally mandated programs, and transfer part of the National Marine Fisheries Service to the Interior Department.

During his confirmation hearing, Secretary Lutnick told me that he has, "no interest in separating" NOAA and that breaking up NOAA, "is not on my agenda." Yet, that is exactly what the Administration is trying to do.

1. Do you support any function, mission, or congressionally authorized or appropriated work within NOAA, or executed by NOAA, being moved out of the NOAA or the Department of Commerce? If so, please describe.

*Answer:*

NOAA's core mission is to protect life and property and in pursuit of that, NOAA plays a vital and unique role in advancing science, stewardship, and services that benefit the American people. That is what NOAA is currently doing and what it will continue to do during the Trump Administration.

2. Have you discussed any plan to do so with Secretary Lutnick? If yes, specify the date(s) of these conversations and describe the contents of any such conversation.

*Answer:*

No.

### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) at the Department of the Interior**

Moving the protected resources, including endangered and threatened fisheries, to the Department of the Interior would separate scientists from the fishery managers for species like salmon. We have the best managed fisheries in the world because of science. It would also create substantial additional layers of red tape because the Secretary of Commerce is required to execute many functions, including regulatory functions, under law.

1. Do you support moving the National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Protected Resources, or any of their activities and functions out of NOAA? If yes, explain why.

*Answer:*

Every decision made throughout the next four years will be made to best serve the American people and will only be acted upon if and when it is appropriate. Ensuring that regulatory responsibilities are fulfilled without unnecessary duplication or delay remains an important guiding principle of this Administration.

### **Eliminating the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research**

You told me that you are proud of your leadership on research and development (R&D) at the Department of Energy (DOE). The Trump Administration's FY 2026 budget proposal terminates \$1.311 billion in climate research, data, and grant programs which would functionally eliminate NOAA's R&D program, known as the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR). This R&D includes enhancing predictive models for emergency management and improving forecasts and early warnings for natural disasters. Recent OAR efforts have improved NOAA's hurricane track forecasting by 8% in a single year, helping to save lives as well as prevent unnecessary evacuations and disruptions to the American economy.

1. Yes or No: Do you support eliminating OAR? If yes, explain why.

*Answer:*

Ensuring that core scientific functions, particularly those that support public safety, economic resilience, and operational readiness remain effective is a responsibility shared across NOAA leadership and the broader department.

2. Do you support the work of NOAA's Cooperative Institutes?

*Answer:*

As with all programs, continued alignment with national priorities, scientific standards, and available resources remains essential. Engagement with external research institutions, including Cooperative Institutes, has historically contributed to NOAA's ability to deliver accurate forecasts, support resource management, and respond to evolving changes.

3. Do you support the work of the NOAA Research Laboratories?

*Answer:*

NOAA's Research Laboratories often serve as the bridge between fundamental research and operational capability, helping to ensure that scientific achievements are translated into real world benefits. They should continue to produce results that align with NOAA's mission.

### **NOAA Workforce**

On February 19, 2025, I sent a letter to Secretary Lutnick urging him to protect NOAA's critical workforce from the Trump Administration's reduction-in-force initiatives and hiring freeze, which would jeopardize the safety of the American public. Despite this warning, on February 27, 2025, the Department fired approximately 650 probationary employees from NOAA.

In addition to probationary employees, roughly 900 employees took the deferred resignation offer in the so-called “Fork in the Road” email, while another ~1,000 employees are planning to leave through voluntary early retirement and separation. These roughly 2,500 employees do not include cuts from the additional RIF initiative that the Administration is planning to implement in the coming weeks or the potential reclassification of thousands of NOAA employees as “Schedule F/ Schedule/Policy Career” which would make them easier to terminate.

These staffing shortages are already impacting NOAA’s core functions, including reduced and suspended weather balloon launches at many Weather Forecast Offices, reduced forecasts, and at least 10 Weather Forecast Offices with insufficient staff to remain open 24 hours a day. NOAA fisheries managers are not attending fishery management meetings and may miss stock assessment cruises. And with the hiring freeze, there are not enough credentialed mariners to sail up to one third of NOAA’s research fleet.

Underscoring this point, today, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, every living former Director of the National Weather Service came together in an open letter to the American people to sound the alarm about these staffing shortages and the direct threat to public safety. The Directors "stand united against the loss of staff and resources at NWS and are deeply concerned about NOAA as a whole...[Their] worst nightmare is that weather forecast offices will be so understaffed that there will be needless loss of life."

1. What will you do to protect NOAA’s workforce and ensure staff capacity to execute NOAA’s core missions?

*Answer:*

Workforce management decisions, including hiring policies and staffing levels, are shaped by a combination of statutory requirements, Executive Branch directives, and agency-specific mission needs. If confirmed, I will work with NOAA to evaluate impacts from any staffing shortages in the context of operational continuity, public safety, and science.

2. What will you do to ensure NOAA has the staff capacity for permitting, consultation, and other review activities critical for construction of roads, bridges, ports, and other priorities of the Administration?

*Answer:*

NOAA’s review and consultation responsibilities under statutes, such as the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the Magnuson-Stevens Act play an important role in supporting the advancement of infrastructure and development projects while ensuring environmental compliance. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that NOAA is able to meet these obligations.



3. What will you do to ensure the National Weather Service has sufficient staff for all Weather Forecast Offices and to provide Americans with accurate and timely weather warnings

*Answer:*

I will work to ensure the National Weather Service remains able to deliver timely, accurate forecasts. NOAA's top priority is maintaining essential services and protecting the American public.

4. Will you ensure NOAA is adequately staffed so that Tribes are able to access meaningful government-to-government consultation and technical assistance on NOAA programs, including grants?

*Answer:*

I am fully committed to supporting meaningful government-to-government consultation and ensuring Tribes have access to the technical assistance they need across NOAA programs.

5. Executive Order 14170 implements a federal hiring freeze until July 15, 2025, but it allows for exclusions for positions related to public safety. Will you pursue an exemption to the hiring freeze under for any NOAA positions related to public safety? If so, which positions?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, ensuring continuity of public safety activities at NOAA will be one of my priorities.

### **NOAA Contracts**

I understand that all NOAA contracts and grants greater than \$100k require Secretary Lutnick's personal approval. There are hundreds of contracts and grants that meet that threshold.

As you can imagine, this has resulted in a significant bottleneck, causing critical contracts to terminate, lapse, or be signed mere hours before they expire. For example, contracts for both the operations of weather satellites and the software that forecasters use to access weather data were hours away from expiring, which would have jeopardized NOAA's ability to issue extreme weather warnings. Additionally, the contract for the R/V Oscar Dyson's midlife repair is at risk

of expiring, and the Dyson is critical for the Alaskan Pollock industry's stock assessments that are used to establish catch limits.

If confirmed, you will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Department. I understand you told my staff that you would end this new burdensome approval requirement if given the chance.

1. Will you end this practice?

*Answer:*

The Administration is committed to cost efficiency and ending wasteful government spending. Having worked extensively on contracts and grants in previous government roles, I understand firsthand how essential it is to keep these processes moving efficiently to support mission-critical operations, stay on budget, and deliver results for the American people.

2. What will you do to ensure DOC contracts are reviewed in a timely and efficient manner without inadvertent lapses?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will support Secretary Lutnick in his efforts to ensure taxpayers receive the benefit of the bargain. I will look into existing processes and collaborate with the relevant stakeholders within the Department.

### **Fisheries**

According to the latest statistics from 2022, US commercial and recreational fisheries generated \$321 billion in sales, 2.3 million jobs, and \$149.8 billion in value-added to the US economy. Commercial fisheries landings alone were valued at \$5.9 billion, and recreational fishermen took 201 million fishing trips that year. Communities across the country rely on these fisheries and the benefits they provide. They also rely on NOAA Fisheries providing world class science and management to support this fishing activity.

1. Will you commit to investing effort and resources into improving fishery data systems, navigating climate change, and other pressures on fisheries?

*Answer:*

The figures cited reflect the significant economic value of NOAA's fisheries and any

future decisions regarding investments, priorities, or organizational efforts will be guided by NOAA's core mission. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in the Department to ensure the American fishing industry continues to strengthen and grow.

2. Will you commit to ensuring stock assessment surveys are completed?

*Answer:*

Stock assessment surveys are foundational to effective fisheries management, and there is broad agreement on their value to the economic and ecological health of U.S. fisheries. Maintaining and improving these assessments remains a priority across the scientific and stakeholder communities.

### **Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF)**

PCSRF provides critical funding to facilitate the recovery of Pacific salmon and steelhead and the commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries that rely on them. The leaked FY 2026 Passback would eliminate funding for this program, which has restored salmon access to over 12,000 miles of streams and leveraged \$2.2 billion in non-PCSRF contributions.

1. Do you commit to protecting the PCSRF program and to distributing FY 2025 PCSRF funds?

*Answer:*

The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund has been an important source of support for salmon recovery efforts and the communities that rely on these fisheries. I understand the strong interest in the program and the significant outcomes it has helped achieve.

### **CHIPS Research and Development**

In addition to the CHIPS Incentives Program, CHIPS and Science also created several programs at NIST -- funded by an \$11 billion appropriation -- to ensure U.S. leadership in semiconductor research and development, and to develop the workforce required to domestically manufacture legacy, advanced, and next-generation semiconductors for years to come.

Given that R&D and workforce development are vital to our long term competitiveness in lab to market microelectronics innovation, will you commit to maintaining the staff and budget at NIST that is needed to ensure the success of CHIPS R&D programs? If not, why not?

*Answer:*

The Department plays a key role in advancing the Nation's technological competitiveness in everything from semiconductors to AI, to increasing the availability of spectrum. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that America leads in these key areas.

**Economic Development Administration (EDA)/Tech Hubs**

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is charged with investing in local communities to encourage and enable growth and innovation in the private sector, with a particular focus on distressed or underserved areas. One of the investments currently managed by EDA is the Tech Hubs program, established by the CHIPS and Science Act, which represents a historic opportunity to strengthen American technological leadership and create thousands of high-paying jobs across the country. The Fiscal Year 2026 President's Budget Request proposes eliminating EDA; however, it does not comment on the Tech Hubs program.

1. Do you agree with eliminating EDA?

*Answer:*

I support President Donald J. Trump and look forward to implementing his agenda.

2. If so, how will you and the Administration meet the Congressional intent of the Chips and Science Act to administer a Tech Hubs program that is vital to economic and national security and has already awarded grants to 18 of 31 designated regional tech hubs?

*Answer:*

The Department of Commerce has a strong track record of supporting innovation. If confirmed, I will examine each program to ensure that it is providing taxpayers the benefit of the bargain.

3. I was able to secure an additional \$220 million in immediate funding for this program through the NDAA, with the potential for \$280 million more to come from a future spectrum auction. Mr. Dabbar, will you commit to ensuring that this \$280 million is preserved specifically for the Tech Hubs program as Congress intended? If not, why not?

*Answer:*

The Department of Commerce has a strong track record of supporting innovation. If confirmed, I will examine each program to ensure that it is providing taxpayers the benefit of the bargain.

## **Quantum**

The global race for leadership in critical and emerging technologies—especially in quantum computing—is intensifying. Our competitors are pouring in billions of dollars to get there first. This year, Microsoft announced the development of a new quantum processor, which could be the transistor of the quantum age.

When you were the DOE Undersecretary for Science, you led the implementation of the National Quantum Initiative Act and helped create 5 DOE quantum centers. Last December, I, along with Senators Young, Durbin, and Daines, introduced the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act. I plan on reintroducing this bill again this Congress.

1. Mr. Dabbar, do you support the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act?

*Answer:*

President Trump recently wrote in support of his National Quantum Initiative to the Director of OSTP. I support the continued emphasis on promoting and funding quantum research and technologies, including the practical application of quantum technologies, as embraced in this legislation. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department of Commerce and NIST continue to prioritize quantum research and development.

2. If confirmed, will you commit to working with me and my staff to advance it?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will work with Congress to prioritize quantum research and technology implementation.

## **National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and AI**

The Commerce Department plays a prominent role in advancing critical and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum, advanced manufacturing, and biotechnology through investing in fundamental R&D at agencies like NIST, NTIA, and NOAA. Last year, I introduced the Future of AI Innovation Act with Senator Young and some of my other colleagues that would ensure that the U.S. leads on AI reliability and transparency, as well as mitigating potential national security risks from AI, by authorizing the AI Safety Institute at NIST.

1. Will you support continued focus by NIST on promotion of AI standards and developing testing for AI reliability and safety?

*Answer:*

Secretary Lutnick has stated that NIST should ensure American leadership on AI standards. He further stated that NIST will continue its testing of AI products. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting these activities.

2. Will you work with me, Senator Young, and Chair Cruz as we consider legislation to authorize the work that needs to continue to be done in this area?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, yes, I commit to working with Congress to ensure U.S. leadership in this area.

### **Funding Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Centers**

The MEP program at NIST connects small and medium-sized manufacturers with resources to improve their manufacturing processes, adopt the latest cybersecurity practices, and strengthen their supply chains.

Each state and Puerto Rico have their own MEP Center, and they are the gold standard of public-private partnerships.

I was alarmed to see NIST announce on April 1 they were withholding funds for ten of the 51 centers, including in Delaware, Hawaii, Kansas, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, and Wyoming. I led a letter with Senator Baldwin and 13 other Senators, demanding a full explanation from Secretary Lutnick and asking him to reconsider.

Fortunately, after we sent our letter, we were notified that NIST decided to renew funding for those 10 centers through the end of the fiscal year. However, there are still upcoming funding renewal deadlines for MEP Centers coming up on July 1, October 1, January 1, 2026, and March 12, 2026, and the Department's intentions remain unclear.

1. Do you commit to supporting and fully funding the MEP program and its centers, which are both statutorily authorized as well as appropriated by Congress? If no, why not?

*Answer:*

As stated during the hearing, if confirmed, I will follow the law as authorized and appropriated by Congress. The Secretary and this administration are strongly committed to supporting U.S. manufacturing, reducing reliance on foreign manufacturing, and creating American jobs, all of which are essential to ensuring the long-term strength of American economic and national security.

### **American Aerospace Manufacturing Competitiveness**

The United States aerospace and defense sector has the largest positive trade balance among all U.S. manufacturing sectors, valued at over \$110 billion, and supports over 2.2 million good paying jobs. China's aircraft manufacturer, COMAC, is a growing threat to United States' market share of commercial aircraft in the global aerospace sector. COMAC's narrowbody C919 aircraft competes with the 737 series aircraft, produced by Boeing, our leading domestic aircraft manufacturer. Boeing has experienced significant challenges in recent years including concerning aircraft production safety and quality issues that must be corrected before production of the 737 MAX can be allowed to increase beyond the cap of 38 per month instituted by former FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker. This will take time and so will Boeing's overall recovery efforts as a company to improve many of their product lines.

Boeing has estimated that Chinese airlines will need 8,830 new total commercial planes by 2043. However, if the current Administration were to issue broad retaliatory tariffs against China without considering the impact that they could have against Boeing's ability to sell aircraft in the Asian-Pacific market, Boeing and the greater domestic aerospace supply chain would be at risk of losing its competitive standing in the global aerospace sector. Such tariffs could have harmful impacts on U.S.-based aerospace supply chain companies and jobs.

1. Do you commit to ensuring that the U.S. aerospace manufacturing sector and supply chain are not subject to new costs and burdens associated with tariffs, restrictions, or economic sanctions?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our trade policies are implemented in a manner that supports fair competition, transparency, and the economic and national security of the United States, including for our aerospace manufacturing sector.

What actions will you take to protect our domestic aerospace supply chain and its highly-skilled American workers from new disruptions – such as issues that would jeopardize U.S.-based jobs and increase costs for U.S.-based companies?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I would be happy to work with Congress to help protect American jobs.

### **Office of Space Commerce**

The Office of Space Commerce (OSC), currently within NOAA, serves as the principal unit in the Executive Branch for representing commercial space interests in policy deliberations, and also regulates the satellite-based commercial remote sensing industry. As a result of Presidential Policy established in the first Trump Administration, the Office of Space Commerce (OSC), is also developing the Traffic Coordination System for Space (TraCSS) to provide basic space situational awareness (SSA) data, space traffic coordination (STC), and services to civil and

private space operators and to support spaceflight safety, space sustainability, and international coordination.

OSC still requires additional authorities to carry out its mission to ensure safety in orbit, and the SAFE Orbit Act, sponsored by Senators Cornyn, Peters, Wicker, Blackburn, Hickenlooper, Kelly, Schmitt, and Lujan, was approved by the Committee on March 12, 2025, with an amendment from Ranking Member Cantwell. The bill provides SSA and STC authorities to OSC and establishes a five-year transition period to move the office from within NOAA to a bureau reporting directly to the Secretary.

However, it is not clear if the Administration is following through with the resources needed to enable OSC to fulfill either its longstanding or expanded responsibilities. Although not addressed in the President's FY26 Discretionary Funding Request released on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the earlier FY26 OMB passback for NOAA proposed providing the office with only \$10 million – a reduction of \$55 million from the enacted FY24 funding level. The proposed budget would also eliminate TraCSS system development, in favor of transferring existing TraCSS capability to a non-government entity.

1. Given that TraCSS development already involves significant partnership with industry and when completed, will provide government validation of commercially-provided SSA data, do you believe it is appropriate to transfer responsibility for SSA, which underpins the safety of the entire space economy, to a non-government entity?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will work to support the safety, sustainability, and continued growth of the commercial space sector.

2. Will you commit to maintaining the OSC staff and budget at a level that is sufficient to carry out the offices current commercial advocacy and commercial industry oversight responsibilities, while also enabling the completion of TraCSS and support to SSA and STC standard setting?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will work to support the safety, sustainability, and continued growth of the commercial space sector.

3. Do you believe that elevating the Office of Space Commerce within DOC would allow the office to be more effective at supporting the global competitiveness of the U.S. commercial space industry?

*Answer:*



If confirmed, I will work to support the safety, sustainability, and continued growth of the commercial space sector.

### **Spectrum**

During the first Trump Administration, there were failures to coordinate on Federal and commercial spectrum policy. I believe we must create a coordinated approach to domestic spectrum policy, where agencies such as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Defense (DoD), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) work together with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) – cooperatively – on spectrum. If confirmed, Mr. Dabbar, as Deputy Secretary of Commerce, you will play a vital role in that coordination process.

1. Yes or no: Do you agree that we cannot put our national security and public safety at risk in order to free up spectrum?

*Answer:*

Yes.

2. Yes or no: Do you agree that NTIA, DoD, and other federal agencies must complete the ongoing studies of the lower 3 Gigahertz and 7 and 8 Gigahertz bands before a decision is made to reallocate that spectrum?

*Answer:*

Yes.

3. Yes or no: Do you agree that spectrum cannot be made available for commercial use in a way that interferes with aviation safety?

*Answer:*

Yes.

4. Yes or no: Do you agree that spectrum cannot be made available for commercial use in a way that interferes with NOAA's ability to predict and forecast weather?

*Answer:*

Yes.

5. Yes or no: Do you agree that spectrum cannot be made available for commercial use in a way that interferes with the functionality of the GPS system?

*Answer:*

Yes.

6. Yes or no: Do you agree that spectrum cannot be made available for commercial use in a way that interferes with the functionality of airplane altimeters?

*Answer:*

Yes.

7. Yes or no: Do you agree that spectrum cannot be made available for commercial use in a way that interferes with the functionality of military satellite communications and sensing systems?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I would work with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to protect national security and public safety in any spectrum decisions.

### **Infrastructure and BEAD Allocations**

The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021 appropriated \$42 billion for the BEAD program, \$1.2 billion of which was allocated to the State of Washington to connect households to broadband. The commitment that Congress made to reach the goal of connecting unserved and underserved households is well underway, with plans in all 56 states and territories approved by NTIA, in compliance with the law.

1. Do you agree that states need the flexibility to implement the BEAD program, and ensure that it works for the people in each state and territory—and that what works in Rhode Island may not work in Texas?

*Answer:*

Every state is different and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. States should have flexibility to tailor solutions to their unique needs, consistent with the law.

2. Yes or no: Will you commit to providing states with the flexibility to use their BEAD funds to select the providers and technologies that work best for their unique circumstances, rather than imposing new burdensome requirements such as forcing states to redo their subgrantee selection process or establishing a national per location cap?

*Answer:*

Connecting every American to broadband is my top priority. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to expedite the BEAD program and get funding to the states, consistent with the law.

3. Yes or no: If confirmed, will you commit to releasing all allocated funds to the states that have already had their final proposals approved? If not, why not?

*Answer:*

Connecting every American to broadband is my top priority. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to expedite the BEAD program and get funding to the states, consistent with the law.

4. Yes or no: Will you commit to preserve the BEAD allocations that NTIA made to states in 2023?

*Answer:*

Connecting every American to broadband is my top priority. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to expedite the BEAD program and get funding to the states, consistent with the law.

### **Tribal Connectivity**

NTIA oversees the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, which Congress appropriated \$3 billion to support Tribal governments for deployment projects, telehealth, and online education opportunities. Roughly \$1 billion in funding for this program is currently frozen.

1. Yes or no, will you commit to completing the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program as it currently exists?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to execute on the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, consistent with the law.

### **Middle Mile Infrastructure Program**

To date, NTIA has awarded nearly \$980 million across 40 states and territories through the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program. This Program funds projects to deploy future-proof fiber over nearly 12,500 miles, connecting over 7,000 anchor institutions.

1. Will you commit to completing the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program as it currently exists?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to execute on the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program, consistent with the law.

2. Will you commit to working expeditiously to ensure that funded projects are able to proceed to deploy fiber across the country?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to execute on the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program, consistent with the law.

### **Digital Equity Grants**

Congress intended to not only establish a once-in-a-generation investment in broadband infrastructure, but also to ensure individuals and communities have the skills necessary to take advantage of the digital opportunities created by high-speed internet connectivity. One example is how the State of Washington is developing a cybersecurity literacy program to ensure Washingtonians have the necessary skills to protect themselves from cyber criminals.

1. Will you commit to fully and swiftly implementing the Digital Equity Act and its focus on all of the core targets identified in the statute, including rural Americans, seniors, and veterans?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will commit to fully and swiftly reviewing all NTIA programs, including the Digital Equity Act, and following the law.

2. Can you commit not to leave any of the statutory “covered populations” outlined in the Digital Equity Act behind and implement the Act fully, as intended by Congress?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will commit to fully and swiftly reviewing all NTIA programs, including the Digital Equity Act, and following the law.

### **Innovation Fund**

Authorized under the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act and funded through the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, the Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund is a 10-year, \$1.5 billion grant program will help drive wireless innovation, foster competition, and strengthen supply chain resilience. Around \$814 million remains unobligated. President Trump has called to roll back the CHIPS and Science Act, which funded this program.

1. Do you support the current funding opportunities announced and underway?

*Answer:*

I support the program and its implementation, consistent with the President's executive order 14080 detailing the focus on delivering the benefit of the bargain for taxpayers.

2. Will you commit to implementing these programs and to complete open funding rounds?

*Answer:*

I support the program and its implementation, consistent with the President's executive order 14080 detailing the focus on delivering the benefit of the bargain for taxpayers.

### **SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR (D-MN)**

#### **Travel and Tourism**

Travel and tourism is vital to the U.S. economy, generating billions in revenue and supporting millions of jobs. That's why I helped create Brand USA to promote the U.S. as a premier destination. But this administration is jeopardizing this progress. Bookings from Canada are down 70 percent from this time last year, causing our economy to lose billions of dollars.

1. If confirmed, how will you work to restore travel and tourism?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen international visitation by promoting the U.S. as a premier destination.

2. If confirmed, how will you work to strengthen programs like Brand USA to ensure the U.S. remains competitive in attracting international visitors—especially considering major upcoming events like the World Cup, 250th Anniversary celebrations, and the 2028 Olympics?

*Answer:*

Major global events are an opportunity to showcase American excellence and attract international visitors. President Trump recently established a White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup to coordinate federal efforts around the 2025 Club World Cup and 2026 World Cup and maximize the economic benefits of sports tourism. If confirmed, I will work to ensure these and other events help drive job creation, investment, and global interest in visiting the United States.

## **SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ (D-HI)**

### **Marine National Monument**

On April 17, the President issued a proclamation that opened the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument to commercial fishing after asserting that the “prohibition on commercial fishing is not, at this time, necessary for the proper care and management of the PRIMNM or the objects of historic or scientific interest therein.”

1. Please explain the scientific basis for the President’s conclusion, including citations for the peer-reviewed literature that supports this Action.

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will consult with the NOAA team to understand this issue.

2. Since the President concluded that the ban on commercial fishing was not needed “at this time,” please explain the circumstances when such a ban would be necessary, and describe how the Pacific ocean will be monitored to determine when such circumstances arise.

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will consult with the NOAA to team to understand this issue.

### **Tariffs**

Secretary Lutnick stated that President Trump’s tariffs are “playing for the strength of America” despite costing American families over an estimated \$5,000 a year, risking a stagflationary recession, and undermining our international competitiveness in scientific and technological advancement.

3. If confirmed, will you commit to pursuing a tariff regime that lowers costs for American families?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will do everything in my power to ensure that trade measures are implemented in a manner that supports fair competition, transparency and our national interest.

4. If confirmed, will you commit to pursuing a tariff regime that strengthens supply chains critical to U.S. science and technology sectors?

*Answer:*

Given my background and as I stated during my hearing, I am committed to ensuring that science and technology efforts, including AI, semiconductors, quantum, intellectual property, the Blue Economy, and technology security are at the forefront of issues we focus on at the Commerce Department. Building a stronger, more resilient economy that is less dependent on unfair or unstable foreign supply chains is a critical part of that.

### **Data Transparency**

The Commerce Department is charged with maintaining data pertaining to the U.S. economy, weather, and the Census. The availability of this data is critical to upholding government transparency and the dissemination of critical public information. Despite this, the Trump administration has deleted records of important taxpayer-supported research with no warning.

5. If confirmed, will you ensure that the Commerce Department's data remains accurate, up-to-date, and that the Commerce Department will not permanently delete research supported by taxpayers?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I commit to following all applicable Federal laws and regulations pertaining to the publication and retention of Commerce data and research.

6. Will you ensure the Bureau prepares to implement a Census in 2030 that counts every person?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the Census is implemented consistent with the law.

### **Support for CHIPS Act**

You described the CHIPS and Science Act as a “historic down payment” for American leadership in semiconductor technology. The Trump administration has criticized and worked to undermine this bipartisan law by terminating vital staff from the office overseeing the program.

7. If confirmed, please describe your vision for carrying out the CHIPS and Science Act as Congress intended.

*Answer:*

I recognize that semiconductors are essential to our national security and economic and technological competitiveness. I look forward to continued implementation of the CHIPS and Science Act as written and as guided by the President and Secretary Lutnick.

8. Will you commit to ensuring that vital investments in scientific research, including in areas such as AI and quantum computing, continue for educational institutions?

*Answer:*

I look forward to continued investments in areas such as AI and quantum and will work with educational institutions that are qualified and eligible to participate.

9. Will you commit to ensuring that vital investments in workforce development continue to prepare the next generation of scientists, engineers and technologists?

*Answer:*

I look forward to supporting effective, efficient and proven workforce development activities to prepare the next generation of scientists, engineers and technologists.

## **Artificial Intelligence**

President Trump has rolled back the Biden Administration’s AI Executive Order in favor of his AI Action Plan, but there are commonsense, bipartisan provisions that are worth protecting.

10. Do you plan to support the continuation of the U.S. AI Safety Institute, which has broad support across the aisle and within industry, to ensure U.S. leadership on AI standards development?

*Answer:*



If confirmed, I will support continued testing of AI models, the sharing of results by NIST (where the AI Safety Institute resides) and the development of AI standards.

11. Will you commit to ensuring that the Department of Commerce maintains the technical expertise and staffing capacity necessary to maintain U.S. leadership on AI?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the U.S. continues to lead on AI.

### **Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)**

The BIS advances U.S. national security, foreign policy, and economic objectives by ensuring effective export controls for advanced semiconductors. Competition with China and technological developments have complicated BIS's work and added new responsibilities. As a result, they must now oversee more commerce than even a decade ago, and face more sophisticated adversaries. Unfortunately, their resources have been essentially flat with inflation since 2010.

12. Do you commit to ensuring that BIS has the resources necessary to complete its job, including technical expertise and modernized infrastructure, such as IT systems?

*Answer:*

I am committed to ensuring that the Department, including the Bureau of Industry and Security, completes its mission.

### **SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH (D-IL)**

#### **Manufacturing in the U.S.**

1. The Department of Commerce's Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program is a crucial program to help strengthen the US industrial base by providing a number of services to small and medium-sized manufacturers. There is one center in each state and in Illinois, the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) leads a variety of initiatives to grow manufacturing, including supporting the development of quantum technologies in our state. IMEC has created and retained more than 7,000 jobs and assisted nearly 3,000 companies. Despite Secretary Lutnick's promises, the DOC announced that it had decided to cancel funding for MEP centers in a number of states. After that announcement, I joined 14 other Senators to express our concerns and call for a reversal of that decision. One week after our letter, the DOC confirmed that it would reverse its previous decision.

- A. Mr. Dabbar, if confirmed, will you stop efforts to defund the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which help American manufacturers?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I look forward to working to support President Trump's and Secretary's Lutnick's efforts to grow domestic manufacturing

- B. Mr. Dabbar, will you commit to fighting against cuts to programs in addition to the MEP that support manufacturing in the United States?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I look forward to working to support President Trump's and Secretary Lutnick's efforts to grow domestic manufacturing.

### **Quantum**

2. Mr. Dabbar, you spent a lot of time working on quantum technology policy, including a number of engagements with the Chicago Quantum Exchange and our quantum community throughout Illinois.

- A. Mr. Dabbar, as the White House continues to slash funding for research, will you commit to use your position to protect investments in quantum?

*Answer:*

I am in support of quantum efforts nationally, as has been delineated by the President in his recent public letter to the OSTP Director, and public comments on quantum by Secretary Lutnick.

- B. Do you agree that the Federal government should invest in places like the Chicago Quantum Exchange and the new Illinois Quantum Microelectronics Park, in order to maintain American leadership on quantum?

*Answer:*

I am in support of those and other quantum efforts nationally, as has been delineated by the President in his recent public letter to the OSTP Director, and public comments on quantum by Secretary Lutnick.

### **Section 232 Tariffs**

3. If you are confirmed, you play a significant role in tariff and trade policy. Considering your lack of background in trade and tariffs, I want to understand how you are planning to engage with career experts at the Department of Commerce on these topics.

- A. Mr. Dabbar, who have you already reached out to at the Department to discuss trade and tariffs and get up to speed? Have you seen any indication that Secretary Lutnick is consulting with the experts at the Department of Commerce prior to making decisions on tariffs?

*Answer:*

Secretary Lutnick is an expert on trade, and I know he discusses trade topics with a wide group of experts. I have had several meetings with Commerce Department officials to get up to speed on public information on a range of trade issues that will come before me.

- B. Mr. Dabbar, are you aware of a 2019 Commerce Department Inspector General report that found that Section 232 tariff policy was conducted with “a lack of transparency” and “the appearance of improper influence in decision making?”

*Answer:*

I am not familiar with that report.

- C. How would you ensure that is not repeated during the second Trump Administration?

*Answer:*

I am committed to working collaboratively and transparently with Administration officials and Congress to ensure that any exclusions would be administered in a manner that is consistent with the strategic goals of the tariffs as well as the legal authority under which they are imposed.

#### **SENATOR BEN RAY LUJAN (D-NM)**

1. Sec. Lutnick is calling on states to use the lowest cost option when building out broadband under the BEAD Program. Although satellite is cheaper and quicker to deploy in the short-term, it will be more expensive in the long-term. Fiber is considered the gold standard in internet connection. Yes or no, do you support deprioritizing fiber in favor of fixed wireless or LEO satellites?

*Answer:*

I support an all-of-the-above solution, including fiber as well as alternative technologies where appropriate. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to deliver the best broadband service possible to all Americans, consistent with NTIA's statutory authority.

- a. Are you aware of any small LEO operators that satisfy IIJA's 100/20 mbps speeds and low latency conditions?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I will consult with NTIA on whether specific products, services, and technologies meet the statutory speed and low latency requirements.

2. Earlier this month, Secretary Lutnick put out a statement saying that the Commerce Department is "revamping the BEAD program to take a tech-neutral approach that is rigorously driven by outcomes, so states can provide internet access for the lowest cost." Yes or no, do you support requiring states to overhaul and resubmit their BEAD plans?

*Answer:*

Connecting every American to broadband expeditiously is a top priority. It is unacceptable that the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program has been bogged down by delays and administrative processes for years. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Lutnick and NTIA to expedite the BEAD program, get funding to the states, and expand broadband buildout, consistent with the law.

3. The Digital Equity Act provides \$2.75 billion to establish three grant programs that promote activities consistent with the Act. They aim to ensure that all people and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of our digital economy. According to recent reporting, the Trump Administration froze those funds last month. However, grant awardees were not notified of such a freeze. Yes or no, if confirmed, will you commit to release and distributing these funds?

*Answer:*

I will commit to fully and swiftly reviewing all NTIA programs and following the law.

4. Did Joe Biden lawfully win the 2020 presidential election?

*Answer:*

Joe Biden was sworn in as President in January 2021.

5. Did Donald Trump lawfully win the 2024 presidential election?

*Answer:*

Donald Trump was sworn in as President in January 2025.

**SENATOR ANDY KIM (D-NJ)**

**Section 232 Exclusion Process**

1. Over the last few months, the Trump Administration has announced numerous tariffs on steel, aluminum, and other materials to the United States. Will you commit to working with the U.S. Trade Representative to set up an exclusions process to these tariffs for imports that fit section 232 exemptions criteria?

*Answer:*

The President is the leader of the Administration's trade agenda and there is not currently an exclusions process, as the President is determined to strengthen domestic manufacturing and not allow our strategic competitors to infiltrate the United States market at the expense of American manufacturers. If confirmed, I would work with Secretary Lutnick, Under Secretary Kessler, and Ambassador Greer on the strategic goals of tariffs and the broader interests of the United States.

**SENATOR LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER (D-DE)**

**Supply Chains**

Mr. Dabbar, in recent years, we've seen firsthand how fragile our supply chains can be, in areas like medical PPE and semiconductor chip shortages.

That's why I proudly joined Senators Cantwell and Blackburn to introduce the bipartisan *Promoting Resilient Supply Chains Act*, which empowers the Department of Commerce to work with the private sector to prevent future disruptions in critical industries and emerging technologies.

1. Mr. Dabbar, how would you strengthen supply chain resilience and better protect American industries and consumers from potential disruptions?

*Answer:*

In order to strengthen supply chain resilience and protect American industries and consumers, if confirmed, I would work with the Secretary and others at the Department and across the Administration to tighten export controls on critical and emerging technologies, conduct Section 232 investigations to assess whether imports of certain

goods threaten national security, and push for the reshoring and bolstering of domestic manufacturing capacity in key sectors.

### **Supporting American Leadership in AI for Energy Innovation**

Mr. Dabbar, AI is already transforming the energy sector by helping improve grid resilience, optimize energy efficiency, and accelerate clean energy research.

However, China is investing heavily to lead the world in AI and energy technologies. Maintaining our edge is critical to U.S. economic and national security.

1. Mr. Dabbar, how would you prioritize the use of AI in advancing U.S. energy innovation if confirmed?

*Answer:*

If confirmed, I would prioritize utilizing AI to increase U.S. competitiveness by advancing energy innovation. While at the DOE, I had the opportunity to oversee a partnership using AI to increase discovery of energy technologies, and there are many other similar opportunities for innovation. If confirmed, I look forward to exploring opportunities in coordination with inter-agency partners.

2. How can the Commerce Department help support partnerships between national labs, universities, and private industry to keep America competitive?

*Answer:*

Robust collaboration between these entities is essential for American competitiveness. Commerce currently partners with national labs, universities, and private industry, and can play a role in strengthening and facilitating those partnerships. If confirmed, I will work to review existing programs and identify opportunities to strengthen those vital relationships.

### **Promoting Ethical AI Standards**

Mr. Dabbar, AI technologies developed for energy applications must also be deployed responsibly, to ensure transparency, security, and public trust.

1. If confirmed, how would you approach promoting responsible AI energy standards through Commerce Department initiatives?

*Answer:*

As stated above, Secretary Lutnick has expressed his belief that NIST should ensure American leadership on AI standards. AI industrial consensus energy standards need to be developed in coordination with industry and other agencies, such as the Department of

Energy, if they are to be understood, trusted and utilized. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting such work.