

## **Testimony of Dr. Greg Autry**

Nominee for Chief Financial Officer of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Before the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
November 10, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell, Members of the committee and staff.

It is an honor to be here, nominated by the President and considered by this august body for this important appointment. I am cognizant of the timing of this hearing and thank you again for being here under these difficult circumstances. I'd also like to thank my wife Susan, daughter Kristen and son Gage for attending.

I was raised by a single mother, under often difficult circumstances. Watching Neil and Buzz walk on the surface of the moon pulled me from a confusing environment into a world of remarkable possibilities. I saw a better future for myself, our nation and humanity. NASA's amazing scientific accomplishments in the robotic exploration of our solar system inspired my choice of a STEM career in computing. I've founded a series of tech startups, selling a couple of them. I've worked as an engineer and manager in the corporate world.

Upon completing an MBA at UC Irvine's Merage School of Business, I was invited to join the faculty. I found I had a real passion for teaching management, entrepreneurship and economics to engineers. I began researching the space industry in 2003. My PhD thesis explored governmental influence on industry emergence within the space context. As a faculty member at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business my deep connection with America's traditional space firms and startups built a reputation as an expert researcher and commentator on the business of space. I have also been proud to advocate for human and civil rights in China, US manufacturing jobs and protection of America's valuable intellectual property.

I've helped many students secure space jobs and internships. I have supported several in their applications to the Brooke Owens Fellowship, which provides mentoring for undergraduate women. I've also mentored many startups. One of these, Relativity Space, has raised over \$175 million. They are using private capital to revitalize older test stands and a derelict 200,000 square foot building at NASA's Stennis Spaceflight Center.

Serving on the NASA Agency Review Team in 2016 gave me the opportunity to dive deep into the agency's projects and accounting. Former NASA CFO, David Radzanowski, has written a letter to this committee noting that, "Dr. Autry understands the role of the CFO and its responsibilities . . . I believe you can count on him to continue to deliver the high-quality management, oversight and reporting that has distinguished the Office of the Chief Financial Officer at NASA over the last decade."

The 1800 employees in the Office of the CFO have been doing an excellent job under superb leaders. If I am confirmed, I look forward to joining Administrator Bridenstine and his excellent team in implementing the agency's ambitious goals.

I have been an advocate for NASA's manyfold missions including planetary exploration, astronomy, Earth sciences, aircraft research and human exploration. I've been a longtime supporter of the International Space Station, COTS and the commercial crew program.

Reaching Mars, via the moon, will require all that America has to offer. I've been a public supporter of all the components of the Artemis program including the Space Launch System, Orion Capsule and the Lunar Gateway. Artemis gives SLS/Orion a mission worthy of their capabilities, an issue that did concern me prior to this administration's bold commitment to deep space exploration and economic development of cis-lunar space. NASA's talent, the immense capabilities of its prime contractors and the innovative spirit of new startups are all a part of the national competitive advantage that will make this an "American Century in Space," returning value to our taxpayers and empowering humanity. This task demands innovative financial leadership, that I am ready to provide.

*Why spend money in space when we have problems here on Earth?* During Apollo, our nation was engaged in an intractable cold war and a bloody ground conflict in Vietnam. There were bitter disagreements at home over the draft, civil rights, racial injustice and women's equality. Several beloved American leaders were assassinated. Protests roiled campuses and riots rocked our cities. The Hong Kong flu pandemic killed nearly 100,000 Americans. Amongst that chaos, NASA's moon landing stands as the iconic inspirational moment of those times. Space exploration shifted our tech sector into overdrive and gave us both insights into and solutions for our environmental challenges. The payback has been huge. *America can afford to have a future.* If I am confirmed as the CFO of NASA, I look forward to working with you to ensure that the funds required to build that future are wisely spent and accounted for in accordance with the appropriations of the United States Congress.

Thank you again for your consideration. I hope you will move to confirm my nomination. I am eager to address any concerns or questions you may have.