Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 18, 2019

Patrick M. Shanahan
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Acting Secretary Patrick Shanahan:

As members of the New Mexico congressional delegation, we welcome the increased prioritization from the Department of Defense toward research and development (R&D) of space technology. The United States is heavily reliant on space systems, and we believe that it is critical to empower the space R&D enterprise with the resources and authorities that it needs and to preserve the elements that have positioned the United States as a leader in space R&D for decades.

In your January directive to senior civilian and military leaders, you rightly acknowledge that *"adversaries of the United States recognize both (1) the overwhelming advantages space capabilities contribute to the joint force, and (2) the dependence of modern military systems on space assets."* As a result, you noted that the *"DoD must make changes to our research, development, and acquisition processes to protect U.S. vital interests in space. Key among these changes is the establishment of the Space Development Agency (SDA)."* We agree that near-peer competitors are moving very fast in developing space R&D and rapidly fielding new capabilities, and that we need to move with a greater sense of urgency.

As you stand up the SDA, we urge you and other senior leaders to look to the state of New Mexico as a host for co-locating the agency headquarters and to be your lead entities for implementing the space R&D policies you directed. New Mexico is already home to many of the nation's core space assets and has a significant space R&D community:

- Hundreds of private space industry leaders;
- Large, highly technical work force and linkages to some of the most cutting edge scientists and technologists in the nation
- Two National Nuclear Security Administration laboratories;
- Space and Missile Systems Center's Advanced Systems and Development Directorate;
- Air Force Research Laboratory's Space Vehicles Directorate;
- Space Test Program;
- White Sands Missile Range, the largest overland testing facility in the United States;
- Spaceport America, a Federal Aviation Administration licensed spaceport with inland launch and potential point-to-point transportation from orbit;
- Starfire Optical Range;
- Aerospace Data Facility-Southwest;
- Space Rapid Capabilities Office (Sp-RCO)

The Sp-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.

Specifically, we urge you to retain and strengthen each of our nation's existing core R&D assets and, most importantly, to ensure that the DoD is not reinventing the wheel nor unnecessarily moving pieces around at the expense of limited taxpayer dollars.

Thank you for your serious consideration. We look forward to working with you and other senior leaders to ensure New Mexico serves a critical role in the creation of the SDA and as a leader in modernizing our space R&D enterprise.

Sincerely,

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Debra A. Haaland
Member of Congress

Xochitl Torres Small
Member of Congress

Cc: Michael Griffin, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering
Heather Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force
Fred Kennedy, Director of Space Development Agency
John Raymond, Commander of Air Force Space Command