

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

IonQ Ribbon Cutting Event

February 15, 2024

Sen. Cantwell Remarks

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Well, thank you very much Peter and it's great to be here at IonQ today. Although I'm pretty sure if you're the CEO and mastermind of this facility you can talk as long as you want, but maybe we'll get some questions from the press that are here.

Well, it's a great day, and a great celebration to be part of. I want to congratulate Peter Chapman and recognize all the partners that are here today in academia and industry. You mentioned many of them. I see our County Executive Dave Somers here. Thank you for being here as well. I'm pretty sure the University of Washington is represented and many others.

This is historic, because as you mentioned, IonQ is going from 65,000-square-feet to over 100,000-square-feet or right around 100,000-square-feet. And you're starting to build the first dedicated manufacturing [for] quantum computers that at least I get to take a look at. I don't know if anybody else gets to take a look at it, but I get to take a look at it later, so I'm very excited about that.

And from those qubits, you will soon be doing calculations that are the fastest the world has ever seen. So what a great milestone.

As you mentioned, our region is already known worldwide for our innovation and leadership. And this facility will continue to build on that. We know that here local software and cloud computing companies have changed the world. And we know that there are many other things that are happening in our region. So it should come [as] no surprise that we are becoming the 'Quantum Valley,' if you will, of the United States.

Now there may be a few regions that are going to fight us for that title, but we're going to do everything we can to move forward on it.

Quantum computing has the potential to be a game changer, helping us solve some of the biggest problems in the world. Create new drugs to fight disease, unlock new ways to produce and store energy, develop fertilizer, and improve food production.

So how does quantum computing work? That's why I said Peter should answer lots of the questions. But as Richard Feynman once famously said, quote "nobody understands quantum mechanics," end quote.

Well, I know here that we're growing capacity. Capacity to solve problems, and to be here at what is now the first dedicated quantum computer manufacturing site in the United States. We are here at a very big moment.

IonQ is building in our region because we have an ecosystem that is already underway. And we want to continue with world class universities, companies, laboratories, and most importantly talented people.

We have about 350,000 tech jobs in our state as of 2023 and that is the highest [state] concentration of tech workers in the country. We also are a top employer in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum, as well as the one of the top states for R&D investment.

So with that flowing into our state companies like IonQ have made the Pacific Northwest a home and are working with the giants like Microsoft and Amazon that are already here to build even more capacity on that.

Quantum computing and cloud computing go hand in hand. And because quantum computers are relatively big and costly, your average person is not really going to have a quantum computer at home. But through cloud [computing] and the power of quantum computing, the solutions are things that will be available to everyone.

We also know that world class research institutions are helping us drive quantum computing. And I'm glad that you mentioned both the University of Washington and the Pacific Northwest [National] Laboratories.

The University of Washington is leading in building a quantum workforce its QuantumX Institute has created a graduate certificate and doctoral fellowship in quantum science, minting about twenty-five new quantum experts every year. And the University of Washington quantum facility is one of the biggest in the country with thirty-five professors and has received already \$170 million in research dollars.

You mentioned your partnership with the Pacific Northwest [National] Laboratories and they obviously are helping with that secure supply of atomic materials needed to manufacture these quantum computers. And having the best technologies companies and those institutions like PNNL and the University of Washington, I think really does help cement the Quantum Valley for us in the Pacific Northwest.

So this is about collaboration. That is why I fought so hard for the CHIPS and Science Act that we passed a year ago. That was really trying to unleash major investment in the United States in next generation R&D that will help our manufacturers being more competitive in the future.

We really felt that we were sliding as a percentage of our GDP investment in R&D. And so the CHIPS and Science Act is helping us translate science faster, to develop more research, and stay competitive in many, many sectors of our economy.

That collaboration means working with our manufacturers in this region and continuing to help them solve some of their most challenging problems.

I know for aviation and aerospace manufacturing, I'm sure they are very interested in what is going on here and how that can help solve problems. And certainly as I mentioned earlier healthcare and medicine one of the key sectors that is looking to quantum to have big breakthroughs.

The quantum computing industry has the potential to add thousands of new jobs here in the Pacific Northwest -- jobs at all skill levels, from technicians to software developers

And so I hope that we will continue to build that workforce in partnership with IonQ. But today, let's just be thankful for this giant leap that's being taken right here in Puget Sound, and the first dedicated facility and the first machines being built. Thank you so much.

