U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Washington State Space Summit

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Remarks

Sen. Cantwell: First of all, thank you to the boss and CEO of Blue Origin for hosting us here today, thank you for that. And thank you to everybody for participating in the showing of what is great technology here in Washington.

I want to welcome NASA Administrator Bill Nelson, to this part of Washington and thank him for not only his leadership asset, but his continued focus in making sure that our country maintains our leadership.

We're here today to discuss how our state and our country stays ahead in space. Just over 11 years ago, the Seattle Times published an article with the headline that said, "Well, what would it take to become a Silicon Valley of Space?"

The Puget Sound area already had been known for leadership in aviation, but it was probably the first time any major newspapers have stated the phrase, quote, "Silicon Valley of Space" with Seattle, and asked how Seattle will become a leader in space innovation and entrepreneurship.

The author, just so you know, it's not Dominic. Okay. But anyway, the author had two big concerns, that Seattle faces tough competition from communities across the United States, and that American leadership in space overall was drifting.

What a difference though 11 years makes, and we can see here today that many companies in the state of Washington are providing growth and opportunity for space jobs. It is providing a booming economy, and it has helped maintain America's position in leadership of space exploration. So I want to thank everybody for that.

More than 100 space companies are innovating in satellite manufacturing, designing new rockets, solving everyday problems from the moon to Mars, and that innovation will also help us with aerospace in general.

The facts are clear, our space cluster is growing fast. And in 2022 the Puget Sound region released a report that showed the Washington space industry had more than doubled in four years to $4.6 billion and had 13,000 jobs.

These workers are going to help NASA's Artemis mission deliver and we're going to send the first woman to the moon, and we're going to get to Mars.

Again, I want to thank Administrator Nelson for coming to see all of this to see Blue Origin, Aerojet Rocketdyne, Boeing, and many other of the Artemis contributors.

Blue Origin's lunar lander alone will generate more than 1,000 jobs and more than 40% of the satellites directly above our planet are made right here in Washington as well. And companies like SpaceX, and Amazon's Project Kuiper who we just saw a demonstration from, these satellite companies plan to increase production to more than 50 satellites a week, and high speed broadband connectivity around the globe.

So these investments in new materials and manufacturing will help us produce more aircraft, train new people at our universities and technical colleges, and continue to make investments.

So even though there are 1,000 current openings for space jobs right here in Washington State. These are jobs from software developers, to engineers, to welders, machinists, and some of those jobs average over $100,000 a year and don't require a four year degree.

So the question is, what do we need to do to continue to make ourselves more competitive from machines and material science, we must increase in support of manufacturing technologies like hybrid composite manufacturing, and training and skill the technical workers to fill these jobs, so that people can continue to help us meet this competition from a national level.

Today's jobs into tomorrow's future jobs are going to depend on the manufacturing sector assembled here today. And that is why I encouraged the Department of Commerce and NASA to create a new Manufacturing Institute here in the Pacific Northwest. I was happy to hear the NASA Administrator say in May that he's been working on that recommendation and that he has been working with the executive branch on that concept, and to make sure that we stay competitive in the next generation thermoplastics high-rate composites.

I will obviously be asking the panelists more about this, and how our universities and community colleges could work together at places like Sno-Isle TECH Skills Center, Gracitics, Starfish, all these people who are creating new jobs, what we can do to get the workforce,

When we put the CHIPS and Science Act together, we also made a $250 billion investment into STEM education, [research, and manufacturing]. I'm hoping this education can be used to educate and train people in this area. And that it will help us complete our Mars mission.

So I, again, hope that we can talk to people today about these innovations, about the workforce of tomorrow, and how we can help the supply chain by not only just building for aerospace, but building for space, too.

Thank you very, very much. And let me thank my staff for putting on a fabulous program today, and everybody for participating.