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**Statement of**

**Wilbur Ross**  
**Secretary**  
**Department of Commerce**

**before the**

**Subcommittee on Strategic Forces**  
**Committee on Armed Services**  
**U. S. House of Representatives**

**and**

**Subcommittee on Space**  
**Committee on Science, Space and Technology**  
**U. S. House of Representatives**

Good morning, and thank you to Chairman Rogers, Chairman Babin, Ranking Member Cooper, and Ranking Member Bera for providing an opportunity for me to address you today. I would also like to thank Chairman Smith, Chairman Thornberry, as well as Ranking Members Johnson and Smith, for their work on this important issue. Your continued support of this Administration's space policy vision and support of the Department of Commerce are greatly appreciated. In addition, thank you to my esteemed colleagues General Hyten and Administrator Bridenstine for joining me on this panel. It is a pleasure to be here with all of you – decision makers, leaders, and enablers of U.S. space commercial and defense policy. Your work is imperative to the future achievement and well-being of the United States.

This has been an eventful week. The National Space Council met on Monday for the third time since President Trump reestablished it nearly a year ago to advise and assist him regarding national space policy and strategy. Under the leadership of Vice President Pence, the National Space Council has been very busy, providing recommendations to the President that have already resulted in three presidential space directives. Space Policy Directive-1, signed on December 11, 2017, calls for human expansion across the solar system starting with the return of manned landings on the moon as a first step to reaching Mars. Space Policy Directive-2, signed on May 24, sets out an ambitious schedule for streamlining regulations for commercial use of space. As I discussed in my remarks at the National Space Council meeting this past Monday, the Department of Commerce is committed to achieving all the objectives laid out in Space Policy Directive-2 ahead of schedule.

President Trump continues to show his commitment to creating more opportunities for the space community to develop and thrive. He demonstrated that commitment at the National Space Council meeting Monday when he signed Space Policy Directive-3, debuting the country's first comprehensive National Space Traffic Management Policy. This new policy directs the Department of Commerce to provide a basic level of space situational awareness (SSA) data for public and non-public use, based on the space catalog compiled by the Department of Defense (DoD). Currently, the SSA catalog of all space objects orbiting Earth, some as small as 10 cm, is based on data from the DoD's Space Surveillance Network (SSN) and contributing sensors, and is maintained by the 18<sup>th</sup> Space Control Squadron, a Joint Force Space Component Command unit under United States Strategic Command.

Space Policy Directive-3 and the implementation plan approved by the National Space Council name Commerce as the new U.S. Government interface for space traffic coordination. This change will better enable DoD to focus on its national security mission. There is an increasing demand for DoD to focus on protecting and defending U.S. space assets and interests, with a parallel increase in the need for a dedicated entity to provide basic SSA data and space traffic management (STM) services to a rapidly growing commercial space industry. Commerce is ready to provide those services to industry to facilitate continued commercial development in outer space.

The need for timely and actionable SSA data and STM services has never been greater. As the U.S. commercial space industry makes plans to launch over 15,000 satellites during the next five years, those expensive assets will face a potentially dangerous orbital environment. The DoD currently observes well over 20,000 objects circling the Earth, many of which are softball-sized or larger pieces of man-made space debris, some flying around the Earth at speeds of up to 17,500 miles per hour. Even more concerning, there are an estimated 600,000 smaller objects that could still cause significant harm if a collision occurred. The impact of such a collision could cause a devastating chain reaction, and create even more dangerous debris in orbit. A large percentage of currently observed space debris resulted from only two major collisions in space. Effective space traffic coordination and orbital debris mitigation standards will help protect our Earth's orbits from further congestion.

For those reasons, President Trump and the National Space Council agree that the Department of Commerce should be the civil agency interface for the publicly releasable portion of the DoD catalog. With this role, Commerce can incentivize innovative space services based on an open architecture data repository. This repository will establish a mechanism for SSA data sharing that will enable enhanced STM services, to include industry-provided data and services.

Involvement by industry and others, such as academia, is paramount to the success of this endeavor. Both mature and emerging space companies, as well as universities, have input and experience that can help shape the development of this data repository and accompanying space traffic coordination best practices. As the number of actors in space grows, the need to refine satellite safety design guidelines and establish best practices necessitates close collaboration. Updated guidelines and standards will enable more efficient and effective industry compliance, and could help establish standards that can be proposed for adoption internationally. Commerce

is committed to facilitating these discussions and implementing their results so that the United States can provide global leadership for space traffic standards.

Commerce will lead this new responsibility in its Space Policy Advancing Commercial Enterprise (SPACE) Administration, a new office being established in the Office of the Secretary. The office will also house the Office of Space Commerce and the Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs office, which already engage the space industry in promotional and regulatory roles respectively. The SPACE Administration will also coordinate the involvement of Commerce's other space equities throughout the Department, including the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, which manages federal spectrum use for space communications; the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which has a proven track record of working with industry to conduct research and define essential scientific standards; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which already oversees the country's largest operational civil satellite fleet and engages in the space domain as the world's authoritative resource for timely and accurate space weather monitoring.

Throughout its various space equities, Commerce is committed to streamlining processes and reducing regulatory burdens that could inhibit commercial sector growth and innovation. Consistent with its deadlines in Space Policy Directive-2, this week Commerce staff published an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. This notice provides an opportunity for space companies and partners to comment on current remote sensing regulations to facilitate the publication of a revised rule this fall. These reforms and our new space traffic coordination responsibility will be essential for opening up outer space for more commercial activity.

This is an important task and we have dedicated serious deliberation and planning in its execution. We have an excellent working relationship with our partners in DoD and look forward to continuing to work with them to carry out the implementation plan approved by the National Space Council. We are setting clear milestones and want to be transparent about achieving them. Further, we want the Congress and stakeholders to recognize that we are taking the lessons of our interagency counterparts to heart, and that the Department of Commerce appreciates how important it is to get this right.

Commerce is first and foremost dedicated to creating economic growth and sustainable development in all industry sectors. Facilitating space traffic coordination will provide the space industry with more tools to be successful. As such, with this new responsibility Commerce will work with industry to find ways to enhance space traffic coordination data and be adaptive to industry concerns. We want to evolve the architecture that currently supports U.S. Strategic Command to be even more responsive to the space industry's needs, and welcome your feedback and suggestions.

With Commerce at the helm of commercial space traffic coordination, we will ensure that the growing space industry remains open for business. I would be happy to respond to any questions members of the Subcommittees may have.