

**REMARKS BY**

**PATRICIA GRACE SMITH**

**ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR  
COMMERCIAL SPACE TRANSPORTATION**

**FLORIDA SPACE CONFERENCE**

**PANEL ON**

**POLICIES: POSITIONING FLORIDA FOR THE FUTURE**

**CAPE CANAVERAL, FLORIDA**

**NOVEMBER 17, 2005**

Thank you for inviting me to be with you this afternoon.

This is an extremely important event in terms of taking stock, focusing and refocusing on the significance of space and our respective roles in it.

It's an interesting coincidence, but exactly 39 years to the day – back on November 17, 1965 – the American Society of Civil Engineers was holding a conference in Cocoa Beach on ‘Space age facilities.’

One of the papers presented that day begins with this sentence: “The Nation’s **first spaceport** is rapidly nearing completion at the John F. Kennedy Space Center, NASA, Merritt Island, Florida.”

More than three decades later, in May of 1997, the Spaceport at Cape Canaveral was the second spaceport to receive a **license for commercial operation**. Our office has stood with Florida working to facilitate this state’s always strong and ever-growing interest in space. And if I might paraphrase the Futron Study, I certainly agree that a busy commercial spaceport will be an economic benefit to Florida, generating jobs, earnings, economic activity, and further enhancing identity as a space state.

As speakers before me have said, we have both old and new challenges. How we collectively resolve the old challenges and take on the

new will determine our future leadership in space – something we should not, must not, take for granted.

Perhaps not since the heydays of the early 1960s has interest in space been as widespread as it is now. Back then, especially among the young, excitement and enthusiasm were everywhere. Back then young people wanted to meet astronauts.

Today ... people, young and old, realize they have the chance to be astronauts, to ride private rockets on a suborbital trip, and not far in the future, perhaps to ride on orbital flights. How will we ensure that we have the people to teach the rocket science, the business of space; to build the rockets and launch platforms; to ensure the public's support so that the people who want to go to space – to explore space – can go there?

Let me give you some examples of what the federal government is doing to promote commercial space activity that includes private human space flight

The FAA, directly through the Office of Commercial Space Transportation encourages, facilitates and promotes commercial space transportation. We do it through the launch licensing process. We do it by evaluating technologies that may apply to commercial space launch activities. And we do it by working with an industry advisory committee

that addresses technology issues and overall industry development. We are the government partner in the facilitation of commercial space.

Both the Departments of Commerce and Transportation host industry conferences at home, and conferences and trade shows abroad to promote the commercial space industry.

And the Air Force and the FAA have established a solid relationship working on common safety standards. That's very important to ensure that whether on a non-federal launch range or a licensed range, we are all on the same page, and safety is written all over it.

At the Office of Commercial Space Transportation, we continue to follow through on the Commercial Space Launch Act Amendments of 2004. And that means issuing guidelines for crew on reusable launch vehicles and guidelines for passengers.

We have also released guidelines for experimental permits for operators of reusable suborbital rockets to conduct research, development and testing among other things. Rulemakings related to our new human space flight authority are currently in agency coordination.

What all this adds up to is plenty of ongoing work to help create the kind of hospitable environment in which commercial space can grow; in

which launch operators, spaceport operators and the industry at large can continue to develop.

The FAA, through our office and our Commercial Space Transportation Advisory Committee, forecasts an annual demand of roughly 23 commercial launches world wide from 2005 to 2014.

That's fairly flat compared to previous years.

BUT ... it's a forecast that doesn't include private human space flight.

I don't know how much that activity will add to the number of commercial launches.

But I DO know it will add to the number.

This emerging industry sector will put more people in space, make it a tangible part of communities where a neighbor, a family member, even you, will have made a trip to space.

The industry also has the potential to offer new options for assured space access capability for the military, too. High reliability and low cost certainly appeal across the board to both civilian travel and backup military access, should that need ever arise.

So commercial space transportation – whether it involves the proven workhorse payload lifting; emerging private human space flight; or assured access for military use – brings a new versatility to an expanding industry.

That means there will be a need for skilled people, including technicians, an important issue I've talked about with General Lord. Here in Florida, Dr. Koller manages the SpaceTec technician certification program. I was at their get together last night, and it's clear to me it was a room filled with great promise to deliver the skills needed to handle expanded space flight needs, to take their rightful place in the new exploration workforce.

Obviously, more launches mean more business. And all of it together means greater and growing enthusiasm as private citizen space flight comes to today's world.

As the industry enters a new phase, I think we all gain if we work as hard as possible to reinforce our credibility and reputation for excellence to the public at large that, ultimately, will have a major say in the shape and success of what we do.

We've each got to figure out how much we want it – how much we believe in it, because once we do that, we'll figure out how to get it done.

Florida is poised to answer these questions. The “how” might begin with reorganizing efforts around a one-stop-shop approach to oversee the many and sometimes varied interests in the state – to field the new customer through an efficient, time-sensitive, business-oriented process of requirements assessment and delivery.

As the industry evolves, I think spaceports will eventually resemble airports today, with respect to airport operations and inter-operability worldwide. Global transportation will likely have new meaning for space transportation.

My view is that, as a nation, our overarching plan should aim for geographic distribution of spaceports serving a full roster of launch operators. That, it seems to me, would be a very good thing for the country, a very good thing for the industry, a very good thing for the spaceports and a very good thing for Florida. Strong collaboration between spaceport operators, new and proposed, can go a long way in building the launch infrastructure of the future. Space transportation's focus must be as much about tomorrow as it is about today.

Let me share just one more thing.

Two weeks ago I was in Shanghai for a conference where I spoke about commercial space flight, specifically human space flight. I can report to you that the landscape of the city has changed dramatically with huge buildings, surging commerce and an enormous and rapidly expanding economy that is a fertile source for business opportunities.

The FAA has just completed a big year internationally. We just negotiated a general aviation safety agreement with China. In the next

decade or so, China's aviation system will be second only to our own in terms of complexity. It will create real economic benefits for China. The FAA is extending its reach internationally throughout Asia. India, like China, is becoming an aviation leader in its own right.

And, with interest in space flight at unprecedented levels, space is destined to become a main player in the Chinese economy. They know where they are currently with respect to the U.S. They also know where they want to be. In our meetings there, we talked much about aviation and about aviation safety. I share the concerns for the future of U.S. leadership in space as relates to China as talked about by Florida Rep. Allen.

But seeing and hearing all this in China reminded me how vital it is for the United States to move forward, strongly, right now to capitalize on our hard-won advantages in space technology. We need to grab hold of the opportunities and meet increasing public enthusiasm with growing private initiative.

We at the Office of Commercial Space Transportation are ready to do all we can to help, because if there are just three words to describe the approach to commercial space taken by the administration, the Department of Transportation and the FAA, those words are "enable, enable, enable."

We could not be more serious. Thank you.



