

STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE DONNA F. EDWARDS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE AND AERONAUTICS
“The Emerging Commercial Suborbital Reusable Launch Market”
AUGUST 1, 2012

Good afternoon. I'd like to join the Chairman in welcoming our witnesses to what I anticipate will be an interesting and informative hearing on the emerging commercial suborbital transportation market.

Mr. Chairman, this Subcommittee has been heavily involved in commercial space transportation issues, including the suborbital systems.

It is clear that developing commercial suborbital systems has been a challenging undertaking. At a 2003 joint House-Senate hearing on commercial space transportation, companies predicted that commercial suborbital flights could be anticipated as early as 2006. A few years later, at a hearing held by this Subcommittee in April 2005, an industry representative estimated that service could begin in 2008 or 2009.

Based on the prepared statements provided by the industry witnesses, I am encouraged by the progress being made by competing designs, and I look forward to continued accomplishments. I would like to better understand what challenges this emerging industry has encountered in getting to where it is today, and what hurdles remain.

Further, I hope to hear from our witnesses on what challenges have been overcome, what opportunities lie ahead, the potential impacts on NASA research activities, and what steps will be needed to ensure that this can all be done safely.

Thank you and I yield back the balance of my time.