

U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.)

Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Apollo 11 Moon Landing

July 17, 2019

Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues in commemorating the 50th anniversary of American astronauts becoming the first humans to walk on the moon.

Fifty years ago, the United States met one of the biggest challenges it had ever set for itself. Through determination, hard work, invention, and innovation, the United States fulfilled President Kennedy's vision to reach the moon before the end of the 1960s.

I remember that time well. July 16, 1969, was my Daddy's 37th birthday. We were vacationing in Florida at the Spyglass Inn on the beach. We were so excited to be close to Merritt Island Florida near where Apollo 11 was being launched. We were in our hotel room watching the television. That is one vacation I will never forget.

I remember as a young girl watching those first men step foot on the moon. It was with great awe that I watched the Apollo 11 lift off from the earth and the lunar module land safely on the surface of the moon. With a lot of amazement, I watched Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin announced that the Eagle has landed and then take those first brave steps on the moon. And it was with great pride that I watched them plant the American flag on the moon.

Today, those brave NASA astronauts of the Apollo program continue to serve as an inspiration that we are capable of anything we set our minds to. Equally important is the reminder that those astronauts could not have reached the moon without the support of thousands of men and women, both in NASA and in the aerospace industry. It is a reminder that we are at our best when we work together.

While NASA's mission has changed and evolved over the last 60 years, the aerospace industry continues to play a vital role in our quest for knowledge and America's national security mission.

In my home state of Mississippi, we are very proud of the conspicuous roles our citizens play in our nation's space exploration endeavors. Since the earliest days of America's space program, Mississippi has played an important role in the quest to explore the stars.

For more than 50 years, the John C. Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, Mississippi, has dutifully tested and approved NASA's largest rocket engines, including the Saturn 5 rockets that took our astronauts to the moon, and later, the engines for the Space Shuttle program.

Today, Stennis is testing engines and rocket stages for NASA's Space Launch System, which will again take humans beyond low-Earth orbit. I am pleased that much like in the Apollo days Mississippi has an important role in the SLS program. As we are fond of reminding everyone, "The road to space goes through Mississippi."

However, Stennis isn't only known for its rocket testing to support NASA missions. It also proudly bears the title of "The Federal City," and one of the federal government's "best places to work." With a 13,800-acre area surrounded by a 125,000-acre buffer zone, it has allowed dozens of other federal and private sector tenants to take advantage of its unique isolation and security to serve our nation's interests across many sectors, perhaps most notably in the fields of oceanography and meteorology.

The meteorological and oceanographic modeling and forecasting capabilities at Stennis provide Naval commanders with the information they need to make good decisions that affect the safety of ships and sailors around the world every single day. The Navy's largest supercomputer is located at Stennis.

The unique federal city of Stennis Space Center covers exploration from the bottom of the ocean to the far reaches of the universe.

It is America's largest rocket test complex, an impressive tsunami and weather-buoy production site, and the place where elite Naval Special Warfare personnel conduct highly advanced riverine and jungle training using cutting-edge unmanned systems technology.

Stennis also houses several private initiatives such as Aerojet Rocketdyne's Engine Assembly Facility, Lockheed Martin's Mississippi Space & Technology Center, a Rolls-Royce Test Facility, and Relativity Space.

The national and international scope of work taking place at Stennis every day creates a local direct economic impact of nearly \$600 million dollars, and nearly a billion dollars in global impact.

As we mark this 50th anniversary, I am pleased that the Stennis Space Center is helping to inspire, encourage, and prepare students to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math-related careers—the talents we will need to get to Mars and beyond.

Since its inception more than 60 years ago, NASA has pioneered scientific discovery and captivated the nation. These capabilities are especially important in today's world where innovation and fostering an interest among our youth in science, technology, mathematics, and engineering fields are vital to the United States continuing to be a success in the world.

I am proud that Mississippi plays a vital role in our nation's work to meet the technological challenges of today and tomorrow. This work occurs not only at Stennis Space Center, but also at so many other businesses across the state of Mississippi.

The people of Mississippi look with pride at our role in the United States reaching the moon 50 years ago, and we look forward to the decades ahead when the testing, technology, and innovation taking place in our state helps the American space program reach new monumental achievements.

Mr. President, I believe the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing can and should inspire generations of people around the world to explore and push the boundaries of what they believe possible.

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