FIRST TELLURIUM
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NEWS >>>

First Tellurium Shares DARPA Perspective on Breaking the One-to-One Payload Barrier for Heavy-Lift Drones

Highly specialized helicopters currently achieve about a one-to-one payload-to-weight ratio—commercial drones are often much worse.

Vancouver, BC, Canada, July 24, 2026 – Vancouver, BC – First Tellurium Corp. (CSE: FTEL, OTC: FSTTF) ("First Tellurium" or the "Company") and its subsidiary PyroDelta Energy report that the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has published a video presenting the significant challenges the drone industry faces in breaching current payload-to-weight ratios, which typically fall at 1:1 or less.

In the video released July 10, 2026 on DARPA's YouTube channel (DARPAtv), the agency explains how economical heavy vertical flight stands as the next major technological inflection point for aviation.

DARPA spokesman and Project Manager Phillip "Donna" Smith states in the video: "Today, a highly specialized helicopter has about a one-to-one payload-to-weight ratio. Commercial drones are often much worse. As you scale up the size of the drone to carry more weight, the cost just explodes."

"This isn't PyroDelta or First Tellurium stating how difficult the challenge is," said First Tellurium President and CEO Tyrone Docherty. "This is the Defense Department's Advance Research Agency. And they emphasize how reaching that one-to-one barrier, and moving to a two-to-one ratio or even higher (as per their Heavy-Lift Challenge purpose), would revolutionize vertical lift aviation."

Smith builds the case for DARPA's objective by stating: "Today, we're standing at the edge of the next great technological inflection point—heavy vertical flight that is economical for widespread adoption." Smith notes that if a company needs to move cargo, they run a cost-benefit analysis, comparing the costs of trucks, trains and ships.

"Helicopters and drones almost never make the cut," says Smith. "Why? Because the cost-per-pound-per-mile transported is just too high."

Smith adds: "If we can drastically decrease that cost-per-pound-per-mile metric, we open the floodgates. We can envision moving heavy construction materials to remote mountainsides or rapidly deploying medical infrastructure."

First Tellurium and PyroDelta plan to demonstrate their drone technology ahead of the DARPA Lift Challenge, which is scheduled for August 2-9, 2026, in Dayton, Ohio.

About First Tellurium Corp.

First Tellurium's unique business model is to generate revenue and value through the development of tellurium-based technologies as well as mineral discovery, project development, and project generation.

First Tellurium is listed on the Canadian Securities Exchange under the symbol "FTEL" and on the OTC under the symbol "FSTTF". Further information about FTEL and its projects can be found at www.firsttellurium.com.

On behalf of the board of directors of
First Tellurium Corp.

"Tyrone Docherty"
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