

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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April 19, 2007

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

As chairmen of the House Science and Technology Committee and its Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee, we have a strong interest in ensuring that the nation's space and aeronautics programs are healthy and robust. In that regard, we are deeply concerned about the mismatch between the resources being provided to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the tasks that it is being asked to undertake. Stresses resulting from that mismatch can be seen in all of the agency's programs.

Your American Competitiveness Initiative has called for increased investment in basic research to strengthen our competitiveness and train the next generation of scientists and engineers. Unfortunately, NASA's grant-based basic research programs, as well as the small- and medium-sized missions like Explorer, Discovery, and Earth System Science Pathfinder that play key roles in enabling scientific advances and in training that next generation of scientists and engineers have suffered significant cutbacks in recent years.

Your Administration recently released a national aeronautics research policy that sets worthwhile goals for addressing our nation's future aviation needs. However, without a corresponding commitment of the necessary resources, the goals espoused in the aeronautics policy will be difficult if not impossible to achieve. Given the importance of the nation's air transportation system to our economy and competitiveness, our national security, and our quality of life, we need to ensure that those goals are met.

Finally, in January of 2004 you announced your Vision for Space Exploration, containing a series of ambitious and long-term goals for the nation's human space flight program. We welcomed the goal of human and robotic exploration of the solar system, and that support is reflected in the NASA Authorization Act of 2005. However, in the years since the announcement, there have been significant cutbacks in funding for utilization of the International Space Station, for development of the technologies that will be needed to enable future exploration activities, and for robotic exploration of the Moon. At the same time, the projected multi-year gap in achieving the capability of the U.S. to get its astronauts into space after the Shuttle is retired still remains.

Mr. President, we believe that a strong, robust civil space and aeronautics program is in the national interest of the United States. We want to work with you to ensure that the nation will have such a program and that NASA will have the resources it needs to carry out its important work. We echo the views of other members of Congress who have expressed their interest in meeting with you on this important matter, and we hope that there will be the opportunity for all of us to meet with you in the near future to discuss how best to realize our common goals.

Sincerely,



BART GORDON  
Chairman



MARK UDALL  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics