

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

SUITE 2320 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301  
(202) 225-6375  
TTY: (202) 226-4410  
<http://science.house.gov>

March 9, 2007

Dr. John Marburger III  
Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Executive Office of the President  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Dr. Marburger,

In the decision to restructure the National Polar-Orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS) developed in response to the Nunn-McCurdy process, a number of sensors were de-manifested from the NPOESS satellites. One of these was the part of the Ozone Measuring and Profiler Suite that was designed to use limb-scattering techniques to obtain three-kilometer resolution in ozone profiles (OMPS-Limb). We are writing to request that you allocate funds and direct the Integrated Program Office for NPOESS to restore this capability to the OMPS sensor that will fly aboard the NPOESS Preparatory Project (NPP). It is our understanding, based on staff discussion with representatives of the contractor, that a decision to restore the OMPS-Limb sensor must be made by the end of this month to maintain the schedule for launch on NPP. It is our further understanding that the contractor believes the cost to do so is on the order of \$10 million.

Returning this capability to NPOESS is one of the recommendations made by the National Research Council in their recent report, *Earth Science and Applications From Space: National Imperatives for the Next Decade and Beyond*. The Council states that the sensor "...is key to monitoring ozone layer recovery in the next two decades and is part of NOAA's mandate through the Clean Air Act." According to an impact analysis performed by NASA and NOAA, the sensor for the NPP mission is virtually complete and awaits only calibration, testing and integration. Restoring the sensor to NPP would reduce the risk that we would lose ozone monitoring capabilities with the failure of the *Aura* satellite after 2010. It also assures continued ability to monitor the recovery of the ozone layer to track compliance with the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

NASA and NOAA characterize replacing the OMPS-Limb sensor as "cost-effective compared to alternative approaches." They also recommend construction of two more OMPS-Limb instruments to assure full OMPS capability on NPOESS C1 and C3. A third argument arises from the fact that the sensor was designed to operate as an integrated whole and the cost of removing NPP's OMPS-Limb may be comparable to the cost of completing the sensor and including it on NPP.

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It follows that a decision to reverse the Nunn-McCurdy decision in this particular instance is warranted. We therefore recommend that immediate action be taken to avoid foreclosing the possibility to recover this capability at minimum cost to the government simply because time ran out.

Sincerely,



BART GORDON  
Chairman  
Committee on Science and Technology



RALPH HALL  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science and Technology



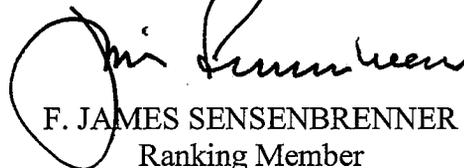
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Ranking Member  
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Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight



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Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics



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