



Statement of AIAA President George Muellner on HR 6063, the "NASA Authorization Act of 2008"

I applaud the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science for the commitment they have made in this legislation toward meeting our nation's crucial priorities in aerospace research and development. In an ever more competitive world, the course we chart now will affect our ability to maintain both our national security and our economic leadership. This bill will permit NASA to continue to support cutting-edge aerospace technology R&D, to meet the schedule of our national Vision for Space Exploration, and to help develop the next generation of aerospace professionals we will need for future technology development and for future mission vision and support.

Among the important aspects of this bill is its increase of nearly \$1.6 billion for NASA over the President's FY09 request. This includes \$407 million in added funding for NASA's Aeronautics R&D programs, which would return those programs to their FY06 level of \$853 million. As foreign competitors continue to increase market share, as we look to the aerospace sector to reduce its carbon footprint & environmental impact, and as fuel costs continue to escalate, it is absolutely critical that the U.S. be able to lead in the development of aerospace products with more efficient, effective capabilities.

I also applaud the support HR 6063 provides towards the development of the next generation air transportation system. To successfully develop the technologies and infrastructure needed to accommodate three times the current demand, we must take active steps towards implementing a plan that will increase reliability, maximize efficiency, and ensure a seamless transition, while allowing for ongoing technological development. This bill will help this process greatly, by directing NASA to work with other appropriate agencies to improve the timeliness of, and confidence in, the certification process for approving new technologies for the national airspace system.

HR 6063 also authorizes necessary additional funding for space, including an increased investment in the Vision for Space Exploration to help bridge the gap in human space flight capabilities between the stand-down of the Shuttle program and the initial operation of the Ares I Crew Launch Vehicle and Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle. It provides an added \$1 billion to support the timely development of Ares and Orion, as well as \$150 million for the Shuttle program to allow the delivery of the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer to the International Space Station. It also supports the Commercial Orbital Transportation Service (COTS) demonstration programs that will encourage commercial development of alternative vehicles to help bridge the gap in crew launch capabilities.

I also commend the Chairman for the role this legislation will play in assessing the impact that current technology export control policies have had on the U.S. aerospace industry and its global competitiveness. Indeed, I would encourage a broadening of the scope of this study, to also evaluate the effect that export control policies such as ITAR have had on our national security, so as to determine whether these policies are actually having the intended result, or if instead their unintended consequences merit changing course.

In sum, HR 6063 is very important legislation for our country. I respectfully urge members Congress to support this crucial bill, which by helping NASA maintain its technological leadership will also greatly aid America's national and economic security in the twenty-first century. It is incumbent upon Congress to fulfill the promise of this bill by appropriating NASA funding at these authorized levels

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