

June 28, 2007

Dear Senator:

We the undersigned are alarmed by the growing disparity between the programs that NASA has been asked to accomplish and the resources the agency has been provided. We solicit your support for increasing the NASA budget by \$1.4B for aerospace research and technology.

Thousands of scientists are committed to keeping our country competitive in science and engineering research and development. As leaders of our nation's foremost professional science and engineering societies, we know first-hand that our colleagues continue their work despite the interrelated and disturbing trends of reduced federal research funding, a shrinking workforce in the science and engineering disciplines, and a calamitous decrease in the number of students choosing to carry on this commitment in the future. We write to acknowledge your past support of NASA research and to urge you to support an overall increase for NASA's FY 2008 budget. Recently you received a letter from leading aerospace companies making the same request for an overall increase. We join with them to bring awareness of the real risk our nation faces in losing our scientific and engineering primacy.

NASA's responsibility to serve as the steward for science disciplines advancing our nation's space exploration agenda includes space based astronomy, space life sciences, fundamental physics, materials science, astrobiology, earth science, environmental science and others. We must continue the innovative research that will support our nation's continuing leadership in space exploration. One year ago, the National Academy of Sciences submitted to the 109th Congress an assessment of balance in NASA's science programs. A principal finding was that NASA is "being asked to accomplish too much with too little." It cited that the agency simply does not have the resources to support the current Space Transportation System, continue the International Space Station, and return humans to the Moon - while maintaining critical space science, earth science and life and physical science programs. The Academy recommended that the legislative branch intervene to sustain a balance in NASA's portfolio. The science programs at NASA have become fundamentally unstable and consequently incapable to make steady progress towards scientific discovery.

This nation has an obligation to future generations of Americans focusing their studies on science, math and engineering. While a foundation in math and science is important, preparing students in these areas alone will not address critical STEM workforce requirements. It is a simple truth that the excitement of space exploration has long inspired students to pursue degrees in engineering and science. However, funding must be available for these students to have the opportunities, mentors, and experiences necessary for a continued firm foundation. Robust research and engineering programs, especially those that support the Vision for Space Exploration, provide incentives for our youth to pursue careers in these fields. Approximately one-quarter of NASA's scientists and engineers are nearing retirement age [1], and similar trends are evident in NASA's contractor workforce. NASA already faces workforce challenges across its science and engineering programs. Funding opportunities for the external science and engineering communities will develop a potential pool of candidates from which the agency can attract its future employees - its most valuable resource.

NASA's FY 2008 request is \$17.3 billion, \$1.4 billion below the congressionally authorized level. This is not sufficient for NASA to carry out its mission. The United States' role as a leader in aerospace research and technology is threatened by this inadequate FY 2008 budget request. Therefore, we respectfully request that Congress fully appropriate the authorized FY 08 funding level. This will support continuing U.S. leadership in research and engineering as well as the education of our future scientists and engineers.

[1] Jackson, 2003. <http://www.rpi.edu/president/news/graynasa.html>

Sincerely,



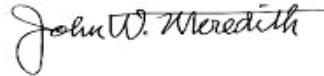
Bob Dickman,
Executive Director
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics



Donna J. Dean, Ph.D.,
President
Association for Women in Science



Russell Rayman, M.D.,
Executive Director
Aerospace Medical Association



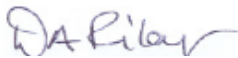
John Meredith,
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Martin Frank, Ph.D.,
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Dr. Peter Norsk,
Chair
ISGP Council of Trustees



ASA Resolution 106-102

WHEREAS, the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 provides that NASA shall expand human knowledge of the Earth, of phenomena in the atmosphere and space and preserve the role of the United States as a leader in space science;

WHEREAS, NASA space science programs such as the Hubble Space Telescope, the Mars Exploration Rovers and Deep Impact have made significant contributions to our understanding of space and the nation's economy;

WHEREAS, NASA space science programs such as Voyager One and the Spitzer Space Telescope inspire our nation's youth to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM);

WHEREAS, NASA funding for space science was projected to reach a level of \$5.960 billion in fiscal year 2007 and to increase to \$6.797 billion in fiscal year 2010;

WHEREAS, the President's budget request for space science in fiscal year 2007 was \$5.330 billion and included a 15 percent reduction in science research, a 50 percent reduction in astrobiology research and the termination of several significant space science programs;

WHEREAS, the President directed NASA in a Vision for U.S. Space Exploration on January 14, 2004, to advance U.S. scientific, security and economic interests through a robust space exploration program by returning to the Moon by 2020 and to travel to Mars and other destinations at a later time;

WHEREAS, Congress approved the Vision for U.S. Space Exploration in Public Law 109-155, the NASA Authorization Act of 2005, and authorized funding for NASA of \$17.932 billion for fiscal year 2007 and \$18.686 billion for fiscal year 2008 in this law;

WHEREAS, the President's budget request for NASA was \$16.8 billion for fiscal year 2007;

WHEREAS, the House Appropriations Committee approved NASA funding of \$16.709 billion and the Senate Appropriations Committee approved funding of \$16.757 billion for fiscal year 2007;

WHEREAS, the Senate Committee on Appropriations approved additional emergency funding for NASA of \$1.04 billion in fiscal year 2007 to pay for the return of the Space Shuttle fleet to flight after the loss of the space shuttle Columbia in 2004;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Aerospace States Association encourages the United States Congress to approve emergency funding for NASA of \$1.04 billion in fiscal year 2007, to approve additional emergency funding of at least \$1 billion in fiscal year 2008 and to establish as a longer range goal one percent of the federal budget for NASA.

Loren Leman,
Lieutenant Governor, Alaska
Chairman, Aerospace States Association

Brian Dubie
Lt. Governor, Vermont
Aerospace States Association