

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to you as Members of Congress with an abiding interest in the important contributions of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). NASA has been a leading catalyst for innovation and technology development and has enjoyed over 50 years of broad public interest and strong bipartisan political support. The agency's work is linked to larger issues facing our country such as national security, climate change and American competitiveness. Currently, NASA faces numerous time-sensitive challenges and needs decisive leadership.

One of the most important issues facing NASA and our nation is the impending retirement of the Space Shuttle, and the subsequent five year gap in independent U.S. access to the International Space Station before the Ares 1 and Orion systems can be deployed. This issue has been identified by the Government Accountability Office as one of thirteen 'urgent' items for your administration to address. As you know, this issue is linked to our economic recovery since the gap could result in layoffs for several thousand highly skilled aerospace engineers and technicians over the next two years.

We believe it is imperative for NASA to have a leader who understands the implications of a five year or longer hiatus in America's independent access to space. The new NASA Administrator should grasp the broad strategic and international aspects of NASA's mission, as well as the technical, budgetary and programmatic trade-offs that lie ahead. We urge you to keep these issues in mind as you search for a NASA Administrator candidate with the right background, integrity and focus on minimizing the spaceflight gap and preserving the agency's cutting edge science and aeronautics programs. Maintaining a focused policy and providing the necessary funding to allow NASA to succeed are essential to the technological advances and scientific discoveries that benefit all Americans.

We fully recognize the difficult challenges our nation faces, and we believe that a focused and properly funded NASA can aid our national economy and contribute to our shared goals of sustaining our technological edge and competing on a global stage.

We look forward to working with you and a new Administrator to ensure a robust, successful NASA. We stand ready to work together with you and continue providing the nation's civilian space and aeronautics agency our steadfast support.

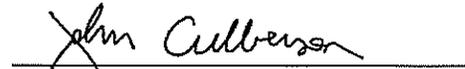
Thank you for your attention to this important issue.


SUZANNE KOSMAS
Member of Congress

Sincerely,

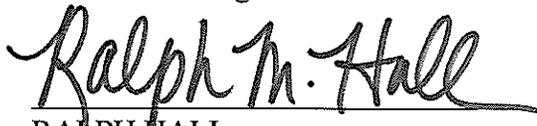

KEN CALVERT
Member of Congress


ROBERT ADERHOLT
Member of Congress


JOHN CULBERSON
Member of Congress


AL GREEN
Member of Congress

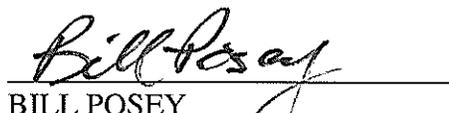

PARKER GRIFFITH
Member of Congress


RALPH HALL
Member of Congress

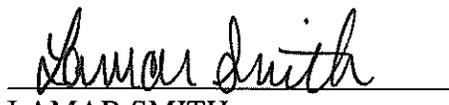

SHEILA JACKSON-LEE
Member of Congress


MICHAEL MCCAUL
Member of Congress


PETE OLSON
Member of Congress


BILL POSEY
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ADAM SCHIFF
Member of Congress


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DEBBIE WASSERMAN-SCHULTZ
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