

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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March 31, 2023

Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Subcommittee  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Chair Cole and Ranking Member Quigley,

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2024 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill, I urge you to prioritize funding for commercial space safety, science, and technology as critical investments to ensure long-term U.S. economic competitiveness and national security. Specifically, I request that you consider my priorities for the Federal Aviation Administration's Office of Commercial Space Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration Research and Development, and the Department of Transportation Research and Development budgets for the FY 2024 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act as follows:

- **Federal Aviation Administration Office of Commercial Space Transportation.** The United States licensed 79 in launches in 2022 and is on track to reach or exceed 100 commercially licensed launches in 2023. In addition, as the commercial space launch and reentry industry matures, it seeks to conduct more innovative, complex launch operations, which strains the resources of the FAA Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST). I request that you support, at a minimum, the President's FY 2024 budget request of \$42.018 million for AST, to support the requisite staff increases, particularly technical staff, to ensure the continued safety and support of commercial space launch and reentry operations, which continue to grow at an extraordinary pace.
- **Federal Aviation Administration Research and Development.** FAA's research and development programs are essential to maintaining U.S. leadership in the broader aviation sector, which has enjoyed a strong safety record and provides a tremendous economic impact. I urge you to support, at a minimum, the President's FY 2024 budget request of \$255.13 million for the FAA Research, Engineering, and Development programs, which are central to ensuring the continued safety and success of the U.S. aviation industry as we look to integrate emerging technologies and new entrants into the National Airspace System and reduce the environmental impacts of aviation. Further, I request that you support the President's FY 2024 budget request of \$136.24 million for

the Engineering, Testing, and Development activity and \$57 million for the Center for Advanced Aviation System Development, which are both within the Facilities and Equipment (F&E) account, and \$56.8 million for the Grants-in-Aid for Airports.

- **Department of Transportation Research and Development.** The Department of Transportation (DOT) supports research, development, and technology demonstration across many modal administrations and programs to increase safety, accessibility, and effectiveness of the Nation’s transportation systems. I urge you to support the President’s request for \$66.5 million for Research and Technology (R&T) in the Office of the Secretary to support strategic R&T priorities. Furthermore, there is a need to support flexible research across transportation modalities that may not neatly fit within existing programs. For many years, DOT has accepted unsolicited proposals from commercial vendors to allow unique and innovative ideas or approaches that have been developed outside the Government to be made available to Federal agencies (FAR Subpart 15.6). In Section 25013 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Congress authorized a similar Open Research Initiative pilot program that would allow the Secretary of Transportation to accept and fund unsolicited research proposals for issue areas as guided by the DOT’s research plan. This program would allow universities to partner with the public and private sectors to solve pressing transportation challenges, and I urge you to support it.

I recognize that these may be challenging levels of investment to achieve as you balance across so many competing priorities. However, our commercial transportation and space sectors, and especially our commercial aviation sector, are absolutely critical to the U.S. economy and Americans’ daily lives. Innovations emerging in the technologies underlying our transportation and space sectors—from autonomy and artificial intelligence to sensors to advanced materials to propulsion systems to fuels and more—are poised to make our transportation and space sectors safer, more capable, cleaner, quieter, and more efficient. In order to realize the promise of these innovations for significant societal and economic benefits, it is essential that the federal government maintains a firm scientific and technological foundations, and I urge you to support these foundations as you develop your THUD Appropriation bill.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren  
Ranking Member

cc:

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Frank Lucas  
Chairman  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology