



29 April 2015

The Honorable Lamar Smith  
Chairman, House Science, Space, and  
Technology Committee  
2409 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Ranking Member, House Science, Space, and  
Technology Committee  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: NASA Authorization Act for 2016 and 2017

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson,

On behalf of the more than 30,000 individual members and 95 corporate members of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), I am writing to urge the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology to pass a multi-year NASA authorization bill that provides policy direction and robust funding without making drastic cuts to any agency missions.

Despite receiving increased appropriations by Congress in recent years, many NASA missions remain underfunded. NASA's budget has actually fallen in real dollars by 10.5 percent since fiscal year 1995. If this pattern is not reversed, NASA could potentially cede leadership in its four principle mission areas: Science; Human Space Flight Exploration; Space Technology; and Aeronautics Research and Technology. The ceding of leadership in space and aviation to other countries with ambitious aspirations has become a real possibility.

While the benefits of space exploration are many, we must not lose sight of the fact that the success of earth observation and weather monitoring, among other things, remain vitally important to the sustained economic prosperity and national security of the United States. NASA cannot only be about exploring Mars, resupplying the International Space Station, and fostering private-public partnerships for continued space development. It is equally important to ensure that NASA is funded to enable accurate weather forecasting, drought conditions monitoring, ocean temperature tracking, agricultural yield prediction, and soil quality and erosion assessment. Federal investments in various aspects of Earth observation are conservatively estimated to add \$30 billion to the U.S. economy each year. Both space exploration and science goals are equally important and deserve increased funding.

I definitely appreciate the desire of Congress to appropriate more funds for exploration systems and planetary science. Having served in leadership roles in our nation's aerospace and defense industry for over 30 years, I can also appreciate the broad benefits NASA's earth science and space technology missions for humanity. It is not optimal for Congress to take from Peter to pay Paul. Rather, NASA will benefit from Congress providing clear policy direction and robust funding for all missions to help sustain U.S. leadership in aeronautics, spaceflight, and related research for years to come.

We look forward to having continued dialogue with the Committee as the legislative process proceeds forward. Should you or your staffs have any questions about this matter please do not hesitate to contact our Manager of Public Policy and Government Relations, Steve Sidorek, at 703.264.7625 or [steves@aiaa.org](mailto:steves@aiaa.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Albaugh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "A".

Jim Albaugh  
President, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics