

BILL POSEY
15TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

www.posey.house.gov

COMMITTEE:
FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEES:
CAPITAL MARKETS

DOMESTIC AND
INTERNATIONAL MONETARY POLICY

MEMBER OF:
HOUSE AEROSPACE CAUCUS

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE

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

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
132 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3671
FAX: (202) 225-3516

DISTRICT OFFICE:
2725 JUDGE FRAN JAMIESON WAY, BLDG. C
MELBOURNE, FL 32940
(321) 632-1776
FAX: (321) 639-8595

October 9, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
1600 Penn. Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Mr. President:

As the Review of the U.S. Human Space Flight Plans Committee prepares its final report, you are in a position today to ensure that your priorities for human space exploration are realized.

In my meetings with NASA Administrator Bolden last month and in my statement before the Human Space Flight Plans Committee, I shared with them that I concur with your promise last fall to close the human space flight gap and to keep America first in space. The commitment you made to the people of Florida's Space Coast, America's high skilled space workforce, and all Americans in sustaining our coveted leadership in space depends on your strong leadership as NASA faces this crucial juncture.

Of all the competing priorities for present and future budget dollars, few are as important or as beneficial as space exploration. Space is the ultimate bipartisan issue. Our lives are surrounded by thousands of inventions and spinoffs from America's space program to the extent that many take these for granted. Few industries come close to delivering the economic productivity and high skilled jobs as generated by investments in our space program. The national security implications are immense, since whoever dominates space can impact the security we have on earth. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the role that our nation's human space flight program serves to inspire the leaders of the future to study mathematics and science. Today, the American space program is undeniably respected by every nation, but at this point in our nation's space program we risk ceding this to our competitors.

Experts such as Norman Augustine, Chairman of the Space Flight Plans Review, have observed that the only way to close our nation's human space flight gap is to extend Shuttle missions beyond 2010. Your administration should give this every consideration. Not simply due to the thousands of lay-offs of Americans that would be prevented during the current difficult economic times, but because it would continue to provide the type of leadership in space that has served our nation well and enhanced our international competitiveness.

Earlier this year I introduced legislation with my Florida colleague, Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Shultz, H.R. 1962, the *American Space Access Act*. Our bill would close the human space flight gap from both ends, authorize the additional resources that are needed, and embrace the hope

that domestic commercial capabilities may develop to meet our needs but does not place our sole reliance on that happening. In short, H.R. 1962 fulfills your stated objectives last fall.

I ask that your amended budget request for NASA's human space flight program reflect your commitment to closing the gap and keep America first in space by calling for sufficient funding for these priorities. I would ask that you include sufficient funding to extend the Space Shuttle beyond 2010, provide additional resources to bring the Constellation program on line sooner, and encourage domestic commercial ventures to continue working to meet these challenges. I hope the commercial ventures are successful and are able to provide some of the needs, but it is premature to assume with certainty that they can fill the void.

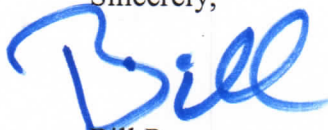
As you consider this request, it is important to remember what has happened to NASA's budget over the past few years and since the Constellation program began. While NASA's budget has remained essentially flat since 2007, as a percentage of overall federal spending it has declined nearly 20 percent. It is my understanding that funding for NASA's Constellation program has fallen nearly \$20 billion short of what was promised when NASA embarked on this initiative – the cumulative shortfall from its inception through what is proposed through 2014. We cannot continue to run our nation's space program in this manner. Simply elevating NASA's budget to the same percentage of the federal budget that it received in 2007 would provide the additional resources needed to close the gap and retain a robust U.S. space program. This would be nearly equal to the additional funding your Committee said would be needed to help close the gap and get NASA on track for the future.

Under your proposed Fiscal Year 2010 budget, outlays will increase cumulatively by more than \$700 billion from 2010 through 2014. Yet, NASA outlays would remain relatively flat over this time period in which they are asked to do so much more. I would respectfully ask that you reconsider this budget and restore to NASA a robust budget that will enable it to carry out its mission. A review and reallocation of a small percentage of how the additional \$700 billion will be spent could help provide these resources as well as a reallocation of a portion of the unspent stimulus funding.

Mr. President, the future of America's space program is at the most critical juncture in generations. As you embark on this and other important policy decisions, I ask that you keep space funding in line with your vision as articulated last fall.

I stand ready to partner with you in achieving this. As always, there is an open invitation for you, the First Lady, and your daughters to come down and view a launch.

Sincerely,



Bill Posey
Member of Congress