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## **Utah Congressional Delegation to Obama: Don't Ground Project Constellation**

WASHINGTON – Members of Utah's congressional delegation are urging President Obama to reconsider his decision to kill Project Constellation, NASA's program to develop the Space Shuttle's successor and further explore the cosmos.

In a March 15, 2010, letter, Sens. Orrin Hatch and Bob Bennett and Reps. Jim Matheson, Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz implored the president not to scrub the project, a move that would kill thousands of jobs in Utah and across the U.S. and surrender the nation's lead in space exploration.

In sending the letter, Hatch said Utah members of Congress want the president to understand the consequences of scrapping Project Constellation and our nation's manned-space-flight capability.

"Our nation's investment in the space program has inspired generations of Utahns and paid huge technological dividends over the past 50 years," **Hatch said**. "Not only has the space flight program spawned hundreds of new companies, many located in Utah, and thousands of jobs based on the technology such flights demand, but it also played a key role in our nation's defense sector which provides for our national security. It is vitally important we maintain our nation's leadership in technology and defense and not cede our leadership position to China, India or Russia. Such a course will come back to haunt us in the future. Cancelling the project now, in a time of high unemployment and after our nation has already invested heavily in the technology, is penny wise and pound foolish."

"Eliminating NASA's Constellation and ARES program will put us at a global disadvantage with human space exploration, destroy the industrial base we need to maintain our missile defense capabilities, and cost us thousands of jobs in Utah," **said Bennett**. "The president's decision to cut these programs is a perfect example of what would happen if Congress gave up its constitutional authority to appropriate federal funding. If President Obama refuses to reinstate Project Constellation, I will work to correct this mistake by securing congressionally directed funds for the program."

"There is a direct link between our national defense capabilities and our role as global leaders in space exploration," **Bishop said**. "Destroy one and we stand to lose our global dominance in the other. Cancelling the constellation program would be an irresponsible, irreversible blow to our space and missile defense technologies. The U.S. stands at a crossroads. Move forward with the proven and successful technologies currently under way through the Constellation program, or face handing over our position as global leaders in space and defense technologies to countries

such as Russia, China or India. Constellation allows both government and private industries to have a role in space exploration without compromising national defense capabilities, which is why this continues to be the most responsible way forward for our country.”

“America’s national defense strategy is fundamentally interconnected with supremacy in space,” **Chaffetz said.** “Our troops on the battlefields in Afghanistan and Iraq depend on crucial intelligence-gathering and communication capabilities, which in turn rely on a robust space program. Both private industry and government have necessary roles in our space program. However, directing the space program remains a critical federal mission. It is crucial that the United States, through NASA, remains in charge. We must restore Constellation.”

A copy of the Utah congressional delegation’s letter to President Obama is attached.

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