

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 15, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

For the past 50 years, the vision and reality of American astronauts exploring the heavens has inspired and unified our nation unlike any other contemporaneous endeavor. However, as you know, the Space Shuttle's last flight is scheduled to occur this year. As a result, for the first time in decades our nation will be without a national capability to place an astronaut in orbit. Accordingly, the Utah Congressional Delegation has been steadfast in our support for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's ("NASA") Project Constellation, which is developing the Shuttle's successor and the infrastructure required to further explore the cosmos. Therefore, we respectfully request you reverse the decision to propose the termination of Project Constellation.

As an alternative, your Administration proposes utilizing private industry as the means to transport our astronauts to the International Space Station. However, even under the most optimistic scenarios, private businesses only have near-term plans to build systems which cannot reach beyond Low-Earth Orbit ("LEO"). As you know, the inability to travel beyond LEO will preclude our nation from sending astronauts back to the moon or Mars. As a result, such a limitation will impede our nation's ability to develop, in a timely manner, the next generation of technologies and economic opportunities which will inevitably evolve from such endeavors, such as which occurred as a result of the Apollo program. We are cognizant your Administration's budget proposal seeks funds to subsidize the private development of so-called "heavy-lift" systems. However, it is important to note these initiatives are preliminary and have largely yet to begin.

By comparison, a version of Project Constellation's Ares system was successfully tested in October. In fact, in 2005 NASA conducted a series of studies which determined a Shuttle-Derived System, which evolved into the present Ares I architecture, provided the most reliable and affordable solution to maintain and enhance our nation's manned space flight capability to LEO and beyond. In addition, NASA has also recently published a report which concluded the Ares system is twice as safe as those being developed by private industry.

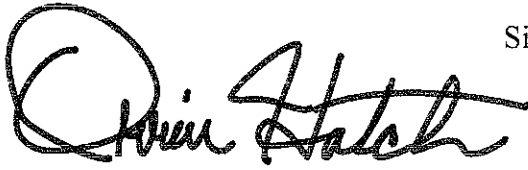
Accordingly, our nation already has placed a hefty investment into the Ares program. Yet, under the proposed initiative, this investment will be largely discarded for a proposition which true cost and safety are unknown. These additional costs will include an extensive safety certification process. In addition, since private businesses have never previously developed a LEO system to transport humans to the International Space Station or a heavy-lift system to explore deeper into the cosmos, one can naturally hypothesize lengthy delays and expensive cost overruns for this novel venture.

Some have argued in this unprecedented budgetary environment the Ares system must fall victim to the budget ax. However, we note the current budget proposal, which seeks to terminate Project Constellation, also increases NASA's funding by \$6.076 billion between Fiscal Year 2011 through Fiscal Year 2015. Therefore, the Administration has already planned to provide significant resources to NASA which can be utilized to achieve Project Constellation's objectives. In addition, due to contractual obligations, cancelling Project Constellation will cost taxpayers, at least, an additional \$2.5 billion.

In conclusion, we have strong trepidations the new proposal offered will lead to a decline in our nation's preeminence in space and curtail our nation's ability to send astronauts to explore the cosmos. As a result, our nation will forgo the technological and engineering harvest which spurred billions of dollars of economic expansion in previous decades. Accordingly, we respectfully request you reverse the decision to propose the termination of Project Constellation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



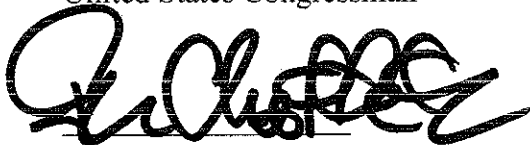
Robert F. Bennett
United States Senator



Jim Matheson
United States Congressman



Rob Bishop
United States Congressman



Jason Chaffetz
United States Congressman