

ROB BISHOP  
1ST DISTRICT, UTAH

123 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-0453

324 25TH STREET  
SUITE 1017  
OGDEN, UT 84401  
(801) 625-0107

6 NORTH MAIN STREET  
BRIGHAM CITY, UT 84302  
(435) 734-2270

125 SOUTH STATE STREET  
SUITE 5420  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84138  
(801) 532-3244



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4401

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

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COMMITTEE ON  
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CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL  
WESTERN CAUCUS

June 23, 2010

The Honorable Joe Biden  
Vice President of the United States  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

Thank you for sending my office your press packet touting the Administration's planned "*Summer of Recovery*" activities. It is truly a bold move on the Administration's part to proclaim a summer of recovery even as millions across the country remain out of work and, even more troubling, in light of many more Americans, like thousands of Utahns, who have already lost jobs, and many more who literally stand on the brink of receiving pink slips, due directly to specific actions of this Administration. I sincerely wish I could share your enthusiasm for this Administration's record on jobs. Regrettably, I do not. I fear that the reality of the employment situation is much less rosy, and far more troubling, than your office's documents suggest.

Mr. Vice President, I do not doubt your sincerity in wanting to help Americans obtain jobs and to help our nation prosper. That is why I would like to invite you, as a part of the roll-out of the "*Summer of Recovery*" activities the Administration apparently plans, to visit my home state of Utah, and specifically my Congressional district, as soon as proper arrangements can be made. Your visit would be a testament to your commitment to bi-partisan efforts for working together for the betterment of our nation.

Specifically, I would invite you to personally visit with some of the thousands of hard working, and capable space and defense workers at key employers such as ATK, Inc., and American Pacific, whose jobs have already been lost over the past few months, and thousands more which lie in immediate peril, as a direct result of your Administration's NASA policies and its decision to terminate our nation's manned space program, including Constellation and Ares rocket.

These individuals should not be reduced to raw statistics in a glossy power point presentation. They represent real people with real lives and real families. They are dedicated workers with unique skills as rocket engineers, physicists, scientists, and technicians. Their skills are often irreplaceable and comprise a key component of our defense industrial base. The impending loss of their expertise and capabilities will weaken our nation. While Congress specifically prohibited NASA from terminating the Constellation program in the Fiscal Year 2010 Omnibus Appropriations bill, this Administration and NASA has done everything possible to try and circumvent the law through such actions as forestalling future Constellation projects, reassigning the Constellation project manager, and most recently, informing Constellation contractors that for the first time in the agency's history, they must immediately withhold

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estimated termination funds from FY10 program accounts in order to force immediate layoffs before Congress can react. Your Administration's top NASA officials are determined, it seems, on doing all they can to decimate the Constellation program, U.S. manned spaceflight, and specifically, the last remaining large-scale solid rocket motor program in full production – the Ares rocket, at all costs.

It seems that NASA and your Administration would rather pay the Russians \$75 million per astronaut per flight aboard the Russian Soyuz in putting American Astronauts into low-earth orbit aboard the International Space Station, than to keep experienced U.S. space workers associated with Constellation activities employed on achieving valuable technical milestones which often spur continued high-tech advancement and further high-tech job creation. Your Administration's new space policies seem to be about picking winners and losers in the private space sector as demonstrated by the termination of thousands of private-sector Constellation jobs like those at ATK, Boeing and Lockheed, and shifting of those taxpayer dollars to smaller, but more favored, start-up space entrepreneurs.

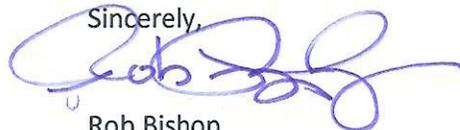
I would invite you, as our Vice-President, to explain in person to these thousands of hard working, tax-paying Americans presently working on Constellation and Ares, how it is a better policy for their government to subsidize Russian Soyuz space workers for the foreseeable future, while putting them in the unemployment line even as the Administration proposes to add \$6 billion more for NASA over the next five years. It just does not add up. I would like to hear your explanations myself.

Mr. Vice-President, because of your Administration's ill-advised NASA policy proposals, approximately 25,000 additional space workers with high degree of technical capacity, education, skill, and competence, are at high risk of losing their jobs nationwide in the coming days unless you intervene. Just this week, it was announced that hundreds of NASA-related layoffs had already begun in Alabama and Texas. Again, these are real people, with real families and real lives. They are hard-working, taxpaying citizens, and frankly deserve better of their government, their President, and this Administration. For them, the summer of 2010 hardly promises to be a "*Summer of Recovery*." With all due respect, unless your Administration corrects its NASA policies, and obeys the law, their summer is likely to be marked by great uncertainty, stress, financial hardship, and standing in the unemployment line. And regrettably, America will be well on the road to becoming a second-rate space faring nation under your watch.

Given the urgency of the situation, I hope that you will find time on your busy calendar as you traverse our country to stop in Utah to make a visit and see these things first-hand. Please have your staff get in contact with my staff to work out all of the appropriate arrangements.

Thank you for taking my request into serious consideration. My constituents and I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress