

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 27, 2010

The Honorable Charles Bolden
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20546

Dear Administrator Bolden:

Thank you again for meeting with us in September to discuss the future of our nation's manned space flight program. As you know, the Utah Congressional Delegation is committed to ensuring the National Aeronautics and Space Administration ("NASA") has sufficient resources to meet the objectives of Project Constellation. Your thoughts and comments, especially regarding the importance of a national infrastructure to send astronauts beyond low-earth orbit, were greatly appreciated by the members of the Delegation.

As we stated during our meeting, it is our belief the foundation of any manned space exploration plan must be the identification of the safest and most efficient means to reach space. As you know, in 2005, NASA conducted a series of studies that determined a Shuttle-Derived System, which evolved into the present Ares I systems, provided the most reliable and affordable solution to maintain our nation's manned space flight capability.

Recent events have shown the wisdom of NASA's analysis. For example, the world witnessed the validation of the Ares design with the successful October launch of the Ares 1-X vehicle. In addition, the critical Orion crew capsule has passed all of its major programmatic milestones.

Undoubtedly, these accomplishments were reflected in the conclusions reached by NASA's Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel which stated the Ares I design was "designed from the beginning with a clear emphasis on safety" and "to abandon Ares I as a baseline vehicle for an alternative without demonstrated capability nor proven superiority (or even equivalence) is unwise and probably not cost effective." Accordingly, Congress has fully funded the development of the Ares 1 system in Fiscal Year 2010.

In addition, another recent NASA report stated if the Ares I system was discarded it would cost NASA an additional \$1.1 to \$3.5 billion to develop a complementary heavy lift launch vehicle. This report further estimated a cost of \$14.1 to \$16.6 billion to redesign the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle to meet the specifications of another booster system. As NASA's budget for manned space flight is expected to be especially limited for the foreseeable future, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which such added expenses are affordable.

Therefore, as the Administration and NASA continue its deliberations as to the future of our nation's manned space program, the Utah Congressional Delegation respectfully reiterates our conclusion the Ares I and Orion programs are the safest and most affordable means of pursuing our nation's long-term space exploration goals.

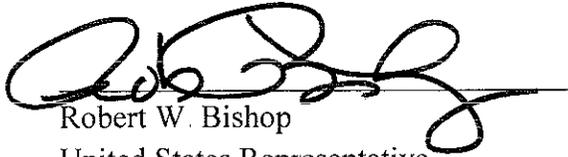
Sincerely,



Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



Robert F. Bennett
United States Senator



Robert W. Bishop
United States Representative



Jason E. Chaffetz
United States Representative