

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 11, 2010

The Hon. Charles Bolden  
Administrator  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
300 E St, SW  
Washington, DC 20546

Dear Administrator Bolden:

In light of the many questions surrounding the budget request for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Exploration Program, we urge you to assemble a team of NASA experts -- appointed by the Johnson, Marshall and Kennedy Space Center directors -- to review how exploration spacecraft and launch vehicle development and testing may be maintained within the proposed budget request to ensure uninterrupted, independent U.S. human space flight access to the International Space Station and beyond. The team should report back within 30 days in order to provide the administration and Congress with this necessary information.

President Obama has repeatedly discussed the need for American students to pursue degrees in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. However, by forsaking NASA's exploration spacecraft, launch vehicle and mission in the FY 2011 budget, we will lose a key inspirational program that motivates young Americans to pursue STEM careers. Space exploration has been the guiding star of American innovation. The Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, and Shuttle programs rallied generations of Americans to devote their careers to science and engineering.

For this and many other reasons, it is imperative that the United States remain the world's leading spacefaring nation. To maintain this leadership, we ardently believe that NASA must continue development of its own exploration spacecraft and maintain a robust human spaceflight program. Above all, NASA must have a clear exploration mission, timeline, goals, and a destination, and its funding must be carefully aligned with this exploration plan.

Under this administration's proposal, each of these critical elements is missing. The U.S. will have no exploration spacecraft or launch vehicles in development for the foreseeable future. By the time commercial low-Earth orbit vehicles are cleared for flight, U.S. astronauts may have nowhere to go. NASA will no longer have a clear vision on its direction and ultimately the U.S. will no longer be a spacefaring nation.

Fortunately, NASA's civil and contractor workforce contain the world's leading scientists, engineers, and human spaceflight experts. We believe they are ideally situated to review U.S. exploration systems and goals and to report back on how these may be maintained within the proposed budget. Specifically, the team should review how current exploration system development and tests may be accommodated within the current budget request. Concurrently, astronaut safety must be of paramount concern throughout this review.

We believe that this review is essential to the consideration of NASA's FY 2011 budget. We look forward to your response and the report of the NASA review panel.

Sincerely,



Eric Felt

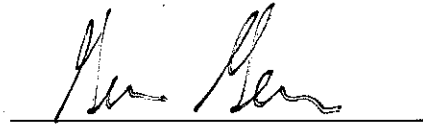
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