



Marion C. Blakey  
President and Chief Executive Officer

July 8, 2009

Mr. Norman R. Augustine  
Chairman, Review of U.S. Human Space Flight Plans Committee  
Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation  
NASA Headquarters  
300 E Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20546

Dear Chairman Augustine and committee members:

On behalf of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), thank you for your hard work and dedication as you review our nation's human space flight plans.

AIA represents nearly 300 leading manufacturers and suppliers for commercial and military spacecraft, aircraft, helicopters, aircraft engines, missiles, materials, and related components and equipment. We advocate for our members' U.S. and global interests in the areas of space, defense, and civil aviation on a growing number of issues and challenges. The industry is a cornerstone of the U.S. economy, providing 660,000 well-paying jobs. Our exports totaled \$95.1 billion last year, fueling a positive foreign trade balance of \$57 billion. That's the largest of any U.S. manufacturing sector.

In January 2004, NASA adopted new far-reaching goals that point toward a next generation human spacecraft, returning humans to the moon, and looking toward Mars and destinations beyond. Our industry finds these goals thoughtful, technically feasible and marked with reasonable milestones. Over the last five years, the Constellation program has steadily moved forward and a great deal of progress has been made. NASA has weighted the options on how to best accomplish its goals, designed a strategy and architecture, has awarded several major contracts, and along with industry has lined up the talented individuals needed for these tasks. The Constellation program is "bending metal" and conducting critical tests. This has produced jobs that are not only "shovel ready" but also "brain ready."

Another important element to our national space exploration policy is the International Space Station. Final completion of the station is approaching and its crew capacity is now at six. This U.S. National Laboratory is ready to conduct unique and possibly groundbreaking research. The ISS will provide valuable lessons for future voyages to the moon and beyond, as it functions much like a lunar outpost or a spacecraft on a long duration flight. Most important, the ISS is a prime example of international cooperation in space. Sharing expertise and costs with other nations will be critical for future long-duration space missions and the ISS provides a platform to continue to build international cooperation.

**Recommendations**

Given the above considerations, AIA would like to make five specific points for the committee's deliberation:

1. The U.S. Space Exploration Policy and the Constellation program should be considered a national priority and receive support as a thoughtful and technically feasible program that is well under way.
2. A robust budget for NASA is essential to accomplish U.S. goals of human and robotic exploration, a healthy science program that looks both out into space and back toward our Earth, and a healthy aeronautics program. It is very important that all these programs receive the proper financial support necessary to continue as part of a balanced NASA portfolio.
3. The International Space Station should be utilized through 2020. This includes allocating the necessary funding to ensure that additional funding to the ISS will not impact other programs. NASA should also continue supporting the development and use of commercial launch systems to give us a commercial space flight capacity to the ISS.
4. Any decisions on the future of our nation's human spaceflight program should make serious consideration on the impacts to the space workforce and the health of the space industrial base. For example, delaying progress on Constellation's heavy lift vehicle and lunar lander would reduce options for retaining the retiring shuttle's specially trained and skilled workforce. Even small delays to current plans can cause NASA and the aerospace industry permanent loss of human capital and reduce options for retaining critically needed expertise. Without moving forward on these vehicles, NASA and the space industry face losing a workforce to non-space projects or even to other industries. Those taking jobs elsewhere may not return when future jobs in our industry become available.
5. Finally, we urge this commission reaffirm to the administration, Congress, and the nation that, while NASA maintains a record of exceptional technological progress, the agency must also be allowed to take reasonable developmental risks.

Additionally, please find included AIA's recently released a special Space Report "The Role of Space in Addressing America's National Priorities." This report acts as a blueprint for many of the priorities the aerospace industry feels are important to our nation in the space arena and may be useful to your deliberations.

In closing, the AIA believes that while NASA is clearly under-funded, a situation that must be remedied, it has been using its resources thoughtfully and responsibly as it forges a clear path for the nation's future human space flight activities that are in the national interest.

Thank you for time and your attention.

Sincerely,



Marion C. Blakey