

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



July 22, 2004

The Honorable C. W. Bill Young
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing with regard to today's markup of the FY 2005 VA-HUD-Independent Agencies appropriations bill. Clearly, the Subcommittee was confronted with an especially constrained budget allocation, given the spectrum of worthy interests represented by all agencies in the bill. As reported by the Subcommittee, the bill includes a total of \$15.149 billion for NASA, a reduction of \$1.095 billion from the President's request, and \$228.7 million from the FY 2004 enacted appropriation for NASA.

Over the course of the past year, Congress has called for the President to articulate a vision and strategy for space exploration. The President's budget proposes the means to support the Vision for Space Exploration while the Subcommittee's position does not provide the resources. We are encouraged that the Subcommittee endorsed the Vision for Space Exploration in their markup, indicating they are hopeful that it may be possible to augment NASA funding as the appropriations process moves forward.

As reported, the Subcommittee-recommended funding level for NASA would adversely affect its ongoing science and technology programs, as well as the NASA workforce, and will delay plans for FY 2005 critical technology design efforts needed to better define the architecture in support of the Vision for Space Exploration. It is very important that these design efforts go forward in FY 2005 to enable NASA to address the long-lead, high risk requirements that will form the basis for informed decisions by Congress on next steps in the Exploration plan. NASA stands ready to provide additional information and respond to any questions that the Committee may have concerning the utilization of the proposed funding in the President's request.

I seek the support of the Committee, in today's markup, to bring recommended funding for NASA to the level proposed by the President. Even recognizing the constraint of the current allocation, I will continue to seek the support of the Committee and Congress for the President's request for NASA as the appropriations process progresses.

Thank you for your support of NASA and the Vision for Space Exploration.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean O'Keefe".

Sean O'Keefe
Administrator