

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

**Headquarters**

Washington, DC 20546-0001



March 21, 2012

Reply to Attn of:

Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate

Mr. Frank DiBello  
President and CEO  
Space Florida  
P. O. Box 656  
Cape Canaveral, FL 32920

Re: Response to Mr. Frank DiBello regarding Notification of Actions Following  
Dr. Becker's Resignation

Mr. DiBello:

Thank you for the explanation of the actions the interim board anticipates taking as a result of Dr. Becker's resignation as the Executive Director of Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS). According to your plan, the Board had established an Executive Office of the Chairman within CASIS, and has asked Mr. Jim Royston to serve as the Interim Executive Director. Nevertheless, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has several concerns that must be mutually addressed. Continuation of the cooperative agreement is dependent upon demonstrated performance under the agreement.

Section 4.1 of the Cooperative Agreement defines the Executive Director of CASIS as the Principal Investigator (PI) for this agreement. Section 4.7 of the Cooperative Agreement provides that "significantly reduced availability of the services of the PI named in the grant could be ground for termination, unless alternative arrangements are made and approved in writing by the Grant Officer." In addition to approving a change in the PI, the NASA Grants Officer must approve the alternative arrangements made by the CASIS interim board during this transition period. The specific clauses of the cooperative agreement are copied below.

Moreover, the functions identified in the Cooperative Agreement and the milestones in the Annual Program Plan (APP) are critical given the limited amount of time remaining to do research on the International Space Station (ISS). NASA would like assurances from the Board that CASIS will be able to meet the milestones in the APP. The agency also requests the interim board explain in writing how these milestones will be met.

Additionally, per the NASA Authorization Act of 2010, "the cooperative agreement shall require the organization entering into the agreement to engage exclusively in activities relating to the management of the ISS National Laboratory..., without any other organizational objectives or responsibilities on behalf of the organization or any parent organization or other Entity." Your interim plan appears to involve the efforts of a member of

the interim CASIS Board of Directors in the daily operations of CASIS. Depending on the authority of this position, this may create a conflict of interest with the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board to oversee CASIS. You have explained verbally how this apparent conflict of interest can be resolved. This needs to be documented in writing and sent to the grants officer for evaluation.

NASA's primary focus for CASIS is to increase value to the nation by utilization of the ISS for other than NASA sponsored research. I appreciate the recent discussions and interactions, and request that you follow up those discussions with Bradley Carpenter and the Grant Officer by written formal response to the topics raised in this letter by March 28, 2012.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William H. Gerstenmaier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William H. Gerstenmaier  
Associate Administrator  
for Human Exploration and Operations

Enclosure

From NASA Cooperative Agreement NNH11CD70A dated August 31, 2011.

**4.1 General Definitions**

4.1.1 "Principal Investigator" shall be deemed to mean "Executive Director" for purposes of this Cooperative Agreement.

**4.7 CHANGE IN PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR OR SCOPE (OCTOBER 2000) [1260.25]**

(a) The Recipient shall obtain the approval of the NASA Grant Officer for a change of the Principal Investigator, or for a significant absence of the Principal Investigator from the project, defined as a three month absence from the program or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project. Significantly reduced availability of the services of the Principal Investigator(s) named in the grant instrument could be grounds for termination, unless alternative arrangements are made and approved in writing by the Grant Officer.

(b) Prior written approval is required from NASA if there is to be a significant change in the objective or scope.