

# INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

501 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, NW, Suite 701, Washington, DC 20001  
202-239-4880 • FAX 202-239-4881 • www.ifpte.org

April 30, 2008

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Hon. David Obey, Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House  
H-218 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House  
1016 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis,

As the President of NASA's largest federal employee union, I am writing you today to support the April 28th bipartisan letter signed by thirty distinguished members of Congress, including House Science Committee Chairman Gordon, requesting additional funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) through either an additional economic stimulus package or the supplemental appropriations bill.

The last time a U.S. President asked NASA to develop a new spaceship and to send Americans to explore another world, Congress backed that vision with the equivalent of a \$30 billion dollar annual budget and with 36,000 federal employees. To cover NASA's new Vision, the Bush Administration has instead chosen to raid NASA's Science, Aeronautics, Technology Development, and Education programs to cover return-to-flight costs and to narrow the gap in manned access to space after the necessary retirement of the Shuttle in 2010, rather than propose realistic, success-oriented NASA budgets. As such, despite the diversion of funds, NASA's Exploration mission remains precariously underfunded compared to the budget and manpower harnessed for the successful Apollo program. Meanwhile, the massive internal reprogramming has caused significant damage to NASA's core capabilities and non-Exploration missions:

- **NASA's Aeronautics budget has been cut by 35% from its FY04 level.** These cuts are forcing NASA to neglect its critical programs in Aviation Safety, Airspace Systems, and Fundamental Aeronautics R&D. Most important, NASA is shirking its responsibility in supporting the Federal Aviation's Administration's efforts to develop the Next Generation Airspace system, just as it is becoming increasingly clear that, to enable the dramatic anticipated growth of civil aviation and to maintain safety and efficiency, we must make fundamental changes to the U.S. Airspace System.
- **NASA's Science budget has declined while urgent Earth Science missions remain unfunded.** The failure to keep up with inflation is threatening NASA's commitment to scientific research, just as it is becoming increasingly clear that we must respond to the monumental challenge of global climate change and the risk of impact from near-earth asteroids. NASA must sustain its unmanned exploration of our solar system as it prepares for a new generation of manned space missions.
- **NASA's Technology budget has shrunk dramatically, with another 33% proposed for next year.** Over the last few years, NASA has drastically cut its mid- to long-term Exploration Technology R&D to cover shortfalls in manned spaceflight programs. This abandonment of the future to cover short-

term milestones is occurring, just as it is becoming increasingly clear that America is rapidly losing ground in Aerospace leadership with respect to Europe and Asia as we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

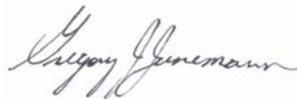
- **NASA's Education programs have been neglected, with a 21% decrease proposed for next year.** This would force NASA to deny the best and brightest young Americans the opportunity to be inspired and guided towards careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, just as it has become increasingly clear that the U.S. is lagging dangerously behind its competitors in training the next generation of high-tech and aerospace workers.

In addition to the immediate, beneficial stimulatory impacts of increasing NASA's budget, the critically needed supplemental funding will revitalize long-term investments in our Nation's future. Unless Congress takes significant steps today to ensure NASA's success across all of its vital missions by providing appropriate funding for its broad array of responsibilities, we may very well relinquish America's future leadership in civil and military aviation, Earth and Space Science, and Aerospace technology, leaving our children to look eastward as the European Union and China move quickly to capitalize on our complacency.

We at IFPTE are sympathetic to the extreme budgetary constraints your Committee faces. Having said that, we do continue to appreciate your consideration of our views on this very important funding priority facing our nation.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or IFPTE Legislative Director Matt Biggs at (202) 239-4880.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Junemann,  
President