

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

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September 23, 2008

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Hon. Harry Reid, Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-211, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi,

The International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) largest federal employee Union, strongly supports Senator Obama's call yesterday for Congress to take the following three urgent actions:


- *Extend NASA's waiver of the (Iran-North Korea-Syria Non-proliferation Act) so we keep that option open for allowing U.S. astronauts to utilize the ISS beyond 2011.*
- *Demand that NASA take no further action that would make it more difficult or expensive to fly the Shuttle beyond 2010.*
- *Provide additional funding in FY2009 above that contemplated in the pending appropriations bills to support the single extra Shuttle flight already approved overwhelmingly by both House and Senate authorizers earlier this year. (Senator Obama Letter to you, dated 9/22/08)*

The IFPTE greatly appreciates the strong leadership of Chairperson Barbara Mikulski (MD) and Chairman Alan Mollohan (WV) of the House and Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) Appropriation sub-committees, who have thoughtfully crafted bills that judiciously increase NASA's fiscal year 2009 (FY09) Appropriations above the inadequate levels in the President's proposed FY09 budget. Both bills enhance NASA's Science and Aeronautics Research programs while keeping NASA's human spaceflight programs on track, and protect and defend NASA's highly-skilled and dedicated technical workforce. Chairperson Mikulski and Chairman Mollohan have both done a terrific job under the challenging constraints imposed by severe fiscal pressures and by a veto-threatening President.

However, an additional \$150 million (as called for in the pending Authorization bill) above and beyond that currently contemplated in the pending FY09 House and Senate CJS Appropriations bills is urgently needed, on an emergency basis (either in the Continuing Resolution or the CJS bill itself), if preparation for that extra Shuttle flight is to stay on track without pilfering other critical programs. This extra flight cannot be allowed to become yet another unfunded mandate that bleeds NASA's other programs for its sustenance and, thus, to end up widening the gap in U.S. human access to space. As Senator Obama correctly recognized, specific additional NASA funds are needed immediately to maintain maximum flexibility for the next President until his transition team is ready to make the looming difficult strategic decisions associated with its FY10 budget.

While IFPTE is aware of the uncertain future of the FY09 appropriations measures, including CJS, and what form they may ultimately take, we respectfully request that Congress act swiftly and responsibly to keep all remaining options open for the future of NASA under our next President.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Junemann,
President

Cc:

Hon. Robert Byrd
Hon. Barbara Mikulski
Hon. David Obey
Hon. Alan Mollohan

