



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coalition for Space Exploration Statement on the NASA Authorization Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. – We appreciate the House Science, Space and Technology Committee in advancing an update to the 2010 NASA Authorization Act this session.

This bill reaffirms longstanding congressional support for NASA's Exploration Program, including the world's only super heavy exploration rocket, the Space Launch System (SLS), and deep space crew vehicle, Orion. Using these exceptional and unparalleled exploration systems, NASA will soon return American astronauts to cis-lunar space for the first time in more than 40 years and, eventually, take us to Mars. With suppliers across 48 states providing components for SLS and Orion, communities across the nation are all a part of returning American astronauts to deep space.

Building off the highly successful flight test of the Orion exploration crew vehicle in December, the SLS and Orion programs are making steady progress towards the inaugural Exploration Mission-1 in 2018.

It's also fitting that the same week we celebrate the Hubble Space Telescope's 25th anniversary, this bill continues support for key exploration science missions, like the completion of the James Webb Space Telescope. Deep space science and human exploration missions are both critical elements of a robust and exceptional American space exploration program.

Congress has repeatedly provided strong support for these exploration systems in the 2005, 2008 and 2010 Authorization Acts, which were approved by both Republican and Democratic-majority Congresses, and signed into law by both President Bush and President Obama. NASA's Exploration Program continues to have the strong bipartisan support from Members of Congress, the Administration and the American public.

NASA's Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel noted in its 2014 report, "If resources are not allocated in the appropriate years/phases of a program, normal progression is not made, which causes enormous additional costs as resources are not efficiently expended. And, without a focus on a clear and consistent goal, schedule is frequently a casualty."

While the Coalition for Space Exploration appreciates the Committee's overall efforts to provide authorized funding levels in a challenging budget environment, we remain concerned that by flat funding SLS, Orion and other Exploration program levels at the FY 2015 Omnibus-level for the next fiscal year, the bill would unintentionally constrain progress towards accelerating program content from Exploration Mission-2 to be included in Exploration Mission-1 in 2018.

We urge the Committee to consider the demands of these programs during this critical moment in the development cycle and hope that targeted adjustments will be made prior to passage of this bill to ensure NASA is able to launch its first Exploration Mission in 2018.

About the Coalition for Space Exploration

The Coalition for Space Exploration is a group of space industry businesses and advocacy groups that collaborates to ensure that the United States remains the leader in space, science and technology by reinforcing the value and benefits of space exploration with the public and our nation's leaders, and building lasting support for a long-term, sustainable strategic direction for space exploration.

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