



June 8th, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chair, House Committee on Science,
Space & Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Science, Space & Technology
394 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson:

I am writing to express my endorsement and support of the American Space Commerce Free Enterprise Act (ASCFEA), as introduced by Chairman Smith, Chairman Babin, and Representative Bridenstine, and the markup by the Committee on Science, Space and Technology.

As the first U.S. company to request and receive U.S. governmental 'mission approval' to send a private robotic spacecraft beyond traditional Earth orbit and to the Moon, we can attest to the need for certainty of process within a framework of minimal regulatory burden. Of particular importance to us and our plans for continuing commercial lunar operations, is the ASCFEA's goal to formally address the U.S. government's obligations under Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty to authorize and supervise "non-traditional" commercial space activities like ours. This legislation creates a clear, objective, transparent, timely and appealable process for American companies like Moon Express to pursue innovative commercial space activities beyond traditional Earth orbit.

We are particularly pleased with the ASCFEA's creation of a new Private Space Activity Advisory Committee that will include private sector representation to help the Secretary of Commerce and a new Assistant Secretary for Commercial Space carry out their responsibilities under this legislation.

The legislation supports a process that focuses and streamlines the regulatory framework, limits the government's role to a light touch, promotes American innovation and investment, and satisfies our international obligations. The premise of "presumed authorization within predefined boundary conditions" is the right approach to non-traditional commercial space activities beyond Earth orbit.

The binding timeframe for review of a registration of a non-traditional commercial space mission is also vital to a workable "presumed authorization" regulatory framework.

This legislation charts a clear path for the freedom of U.S. space enterprise to flourish, carrying forward strong foundational principles of the United States into the frontiers of space. I recognize and appreciate the Committee's continued bipartisan support for America's commercial space industry, and endorse it being reported favorably to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

I am thankful to you, Chairman Babin, Mr. Bridenstine, and all your staff who have worked on developing this important legislation. I am particularly appreciative of the inclusive and transparent process that has welcomed and considered feedback from commercial space stakeholders on the key aspects of the bill.

Thank you for your continuing leadership and support for the U.S. commercial space industry. I wish you a successful markup today.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Richards'.

Dr. Robert (Bob) Richards
Founder, President & CEO

CC:

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
The Honorable Brian Babin
The Honorable Jim Bridenstine
The Honorable Ami Bera
The Honorable Ed Perlmutter
The Honorable Derek Kilmer