



June 11, 2007

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski:

We are writing in response to your letter to the President concerning our country's civil space activities. There is certainly no question that a balanced, robust space program is in the nation's interest, and we appreciate your enthusiasm and support for this effort. The White House has devoted much attention in recent years to the future of America's space program, and in that context the President in 2004 articulated a bold vision of human and robotic space exploration for the nation to pursue in the years ahead.

Realizing this vision does require resources, and it is our view that the President's budget requests since the 2004 announcement would have provided sufficient resources to implement this program and to support other important NASA activities, such as science and aeronautics. While some difficult choices have been required in recent years, we believe NASA remains generally well-positioned to carry out a balanced civil space effort and to maintain the nation's leadership in this sector. Challenges remain, however, that need to be addressed in the future. These include the difficult task of safely flying the Shuttle until its 2010 retirement while developing the new vehicles needed to support the exploration program, and accomplishing this in an environment where recent appropriations for NASA fell significantly below the requested amounts. The implications and next steps regarding these issues are still being explored with NASA.

The President agrees we need an open and candid dialogue on the path forward to sustaining a balanced, robust space program. With that in mind, we, along with Administrator Griffin, would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss civil space and other important topics in coming weeks, as permitted by your schedule.

Thank you once again for your letter and for your strong interest in and support for the U.S. space program.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Portman
Director
Office of Management and Budget

John H. Marburger, III
Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy

Identical Letter Sent to:

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
The Honorable Bill Nelson
The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
The Honorable Ken Calvert
The Honorable Michael T. McCaul
The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
The Honorable Ralph M. Hall
The Honorable John Abney Culberson
The Honorable Gene Green
The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
The Honorable Robert E. "Bud" Cramer
The Honorable Tom Feeney
The Honorable Nick Lampson
The Honorable Adam B. Schiff
The Honorable Dave Weldon, M.D.
The Honorable Bart Gordon
The Honorable Mark Udall