

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price,

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request the Subcommittee fund the Federal Aviation Administration Office of Commercial Space Transportation (FAA/AST) at the President's Budget Request level of **\$19.8 million**.

The commercial space industry holds enormous potential both as a tool of economic growth and an economic provider of services. It is a hotbed of innovation and a critical aspect of maintaining American preeminence in space. The recent enactment of the House Majority Leader's Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act (P.L. 114-90) furthers the intention and expectation that commercial space activity will increase. This will necessarily increase the activity of FAA/AST, the entity responsible for regulating, encouraging, facilitating, and promoting the commercial space industry.

FAA/AST does not have the resources to efficiently or effectively carry out its duties currently, and will only be further tried as commercial space activity expands. Since Fiscal Year 2006, launch and reentry operations have increased 200 percent, the number of authorizations issued by FAA/AST has increased by 450 percent, and safety inspections have increased by 725 percent. Over the same time frame, FAA/AST staffing levels have only grown by 42 percent.

Additionally, FAA/AST is currently engaged in 62 total active projects, which includes licenses, permits, safety approvals, payload reviews, and other activities. For comparison, FAA/AST was engaged in 38 total active projects at this point a year ago.

Without adequate funding, FAA/AST will have to prioritize issuing licenses and permits to the detriment of all other activities, such as pre-application consultations, that eventually lead to license applications. This could hinder companies' decision-making processes and slow down projects. Additionally, it is entirely feasible that, should commercial space activity grow as we expect it to, that FAA/AST could be forced to prioritize which licenses and permits get adjudicated within statutory time limits.

If FAA/AST were to be appropriated **\$19.8 million**, this would allow the agency to hire 13 additional employees to support the current and expected workload facing this office. As supporters of the commercial space industry, we recognize the need for this office to receive the proper resources to carry

out its congressionally mandated duties. We urge the subcommittee to fully fund this agency, which will facilitate the commercial space industry to grow and innovate.

Sincerely,


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VA-08


Mo Brooks
AL-05


Barbara Comstock
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