

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 30, 2016

The Honorable Michael Huerta  
Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20591

The Honorable Deborah Lee James  
Secretary, United States Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330

The Honorable Charles Bolden  
Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
300 E Street SW  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Administrator Huerta, Secretary James, and Administrator Bolden,

We write to express our strong support for the collective work of your organizations in facilitating the development of a robust, domestic commercial space launch industry, in order to establish fair and level competition in the National Security Space and Civil Space launch markets, and ensuring the safety of the public and the safe delivery of our nation's critical scientific and military payloads to orbit.

The recent mishap involving a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket during a pre-launch ground test in advance of a commercial mission from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station is a reminder of the challenging nature of spaceflight. Fortunately, due to strong safety procedures and established regulatory processes, the mishap resulted in no loss of life, no injuries, and no damages to third party property.

We recognize that the space business is technologically challenging. Given these challenges, Congress many years ago passed bipartisan legislation governing the issuance of launch and reentry licenses for commercial spaceflight activities by the Secretary of Transportation. Accordingly, the FAA has established regulations that govern licensing as well as mishap and accident investigations. Consistent with regulations, the Falcon 9 anomaly has been properly classified as a "mishap" under federal law and is being resolved under applicable regulatory procedures.

We are pleased that FAA is maintaining a strong and prudent oversight role that appropriately draws upon private sector insight in ensuring a robust investigative process and safe return to flight for SpaceX. We encourage FAA to continue to leverage its considerable investigative expertise to help SpaceX come to resolution swiftly and safely, and we urge FAA to continue implementing its role in accordance with applicable federal law.

Further, we understand that the Air Force and NASA, as well as their federally-funded technical advisors, are actively participating in the Accident Investigation Team at the request of SpaceX, as well as pursuing parallel reviews. We applaud this approach as consistent with long-standing accident investigation procedures and post-anomaly return-to-flight processes internal to Air Force and NASA regulations. We are confident that current NASA and Air Force procedures will ensure that future U.S. Government missions that utilize the Falcon 9, and any other launch vehicle system, will undergo appropriate flight worthiness evaluations prior to flight.

Accidents are unfortunate events, and accident investigations should not be politicized. We encourage you to reject calls for your organizations to abandon established, well-considered, and long-standing procedures.

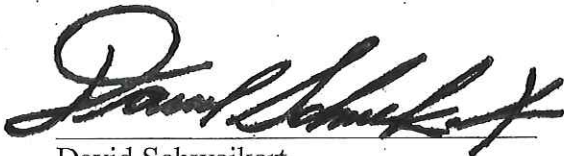
Sincerely,



Bill Flores  
Member of Congress



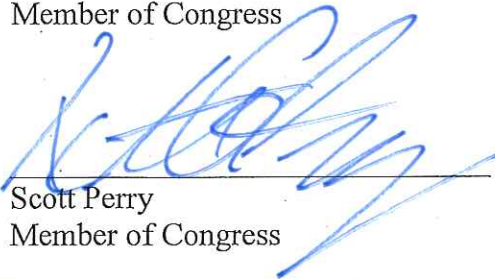
Loretta Sanchez  
Member of Congress



David Schweikert  
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



Scott Perry  
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher  
Member of Congress



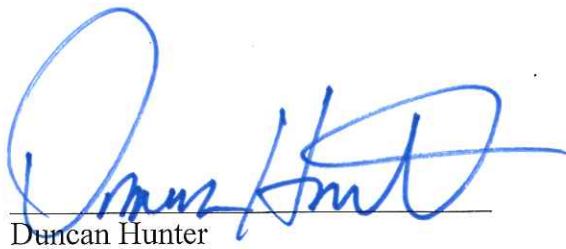
André Carson  
Member of Congress



Bill Shuster  
Member of Congress



Steve Israel  
Member of Congress



Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress



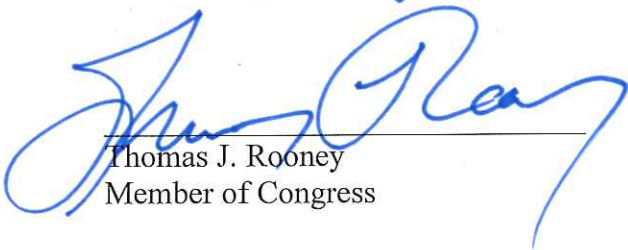
Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress



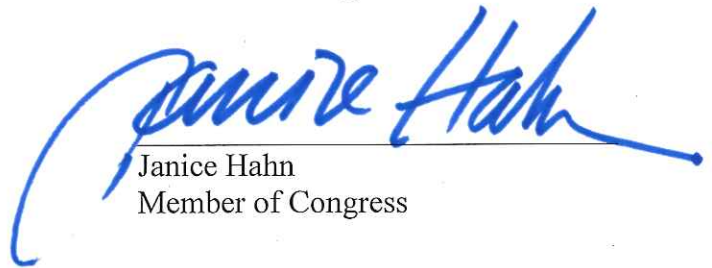
Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



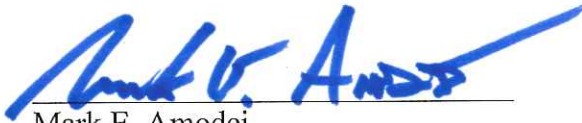
Brenda L. Lawrence  
Member of Congress



Thomas J. Rooney  
Member of Congress



Janice Hahn  
Member of Congress



Mark E. Amodei  
Member of Congress



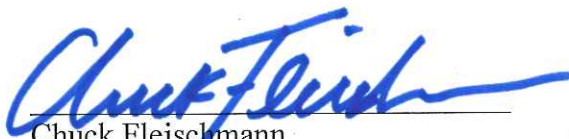
Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress



Chuck Fleischmann  
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



Scott Peters  
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress