

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2016

The Honorable Hal Rogers and Nita Lowey
Chairman and Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building, H-310
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Culberson and Mike Honda
Chairman and Ranking Member, Subcommittee
on Commerce, Justice, Science
House Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building, H-310
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Culberson and Ranking Members Lowey and Honda,

During your consideration of Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations, we respectfully write to urge your support for the top line funding level for the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate of \$712 million requested in the Fiscal Year 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill.

The proposed CJS funding level for NASA's aeronautics research reflects the rapid progress and importance of several of the Directorate's primary programs, such as the X-57 SCEPTOR/"Maxwell," the quiet supersonic aircraft, and technology development for enabling unmanned aircraft system (UAS) access to all segments of the National Airspace System (NAS). The increase over the enacted Fiscal Year 2016 level is a necessary step given the life-cycle costs for each of these programs as they advance through their design and development phases and into flight testing.

Upcoming X-planes and X-systems are part of NASA's New Aviation Horizons initiative, which seeks to demonstrate the revolutionary designs and technologies that will define the next generation of safer, faster, and quieter air travel. Once validated, these innovations will produce improvements to our quality of life and economic impacts that will be felt immediately by the American public.

NASA's research for integration of UAS into our air space and test center capabilities is critical to the expanded operations of UAS and capturing the full economic benefits of this emerging technology. The agency is leading a government-industry collaboration to develop efficient, safe traffic management systems through its UAS Traffic Management research within the Airspace Operation and Safety Program. Additionally, its UAS Integration in the NAS project will help enable routine civil operations for UAS of all sizes and capabilities in the NAS.

NASA, in coordination with DARPA and the military services, continues to play a vital role in the nation's hypersonics research and development enterprise. NASA test facilities, range infrastructure, and human resources must receive stable, sustained funding to ensure we achieve operational capability of offensive and defensive hypersonics systems before our adversaries, who continue to make progress in their own hypersonics technology.


The Senate-proposed National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2016, S. 3346, requests a \$40 million cut to the Fiscal Year 2016 enacted level for aeronautics research. This not only fails to do justice to the Agency's strategic goals but will arrest the advancement of United States aviation at a time the global industry is undergoing unprecedented growth and transformation.

American leadership in aviation technology, a sector that generates an \$82.5 billion positive trade balance and supports 1.2 million jobs, is facing emerging challenges from aircraft companies in Russia, China, India, and Brazil that are benefiting from multi-billion dollar investments by their governments. Over the next 17 years, the market for new aircraft sales, parts and services will grow to between \$8 trillion and \$10 trillion. Now is not the time to tie our own hands in aeronautics research.


In addition to funding the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate at \$712 million, we would note the significant and urgently needed modernization of NASA's aeronautics test facilities are required in order to enable the technology advances which would be realized through the NASA New Horizons initiative. A 21st Century Aeronautics Capabilities Initiative modeled on the success of the 21st Century Launch Complex Program, within the Construction and Environmental Compliance and Restoration Account, would enable NASA to upgrade and create facilities for civil and national security aeronautics research.

We strongly urge you to maintain a position that adequately supports our nation's aeronautics enterprise in negotiating the appropriated funding levels for NASA for Fiscal Year 2017 with your counterparts in the Senate. We must recommit ourselves to an aeronautics program that is capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century, positions America's industry to lead tomorrow's global aviation market, and maintains the nation's air dominance.


Sincerely,



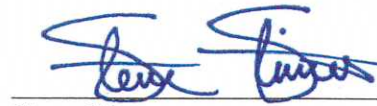
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Member of Congress




John Garamendi
Member of Congress



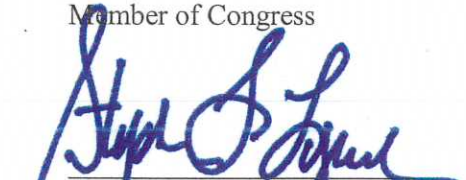
Kevin Cramer
Member of Congress



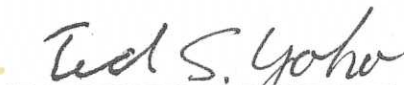
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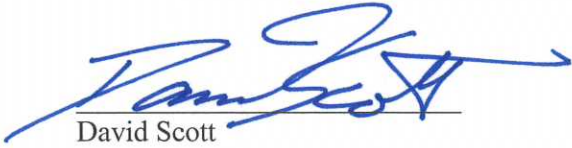
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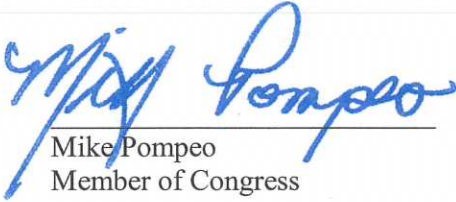
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