



May 30, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-146, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
S-125, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
S-142, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Chairman Cole, Chairman Moran, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Murray, Ranking Member DeLauro, Ranking Member Van Hollen, and Ranking Member Meng:

As you prepare for a busy appropriations markup season, the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), representing hundreds of aerospace manufacturers and suppliers and more than 2.2 million U.S. workers, writes to express our concern about the President's Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Budget Request and its impact to civil space programs and the commercial space industry. We strongly believe that civil space and science missions are indispensable to ensuring that American dominance, technological power, and ambition remains unmatched in an era of strategic competition with China. We ask that your Committees resolve to protect the civil space budget in FY26.

The Chinese National Space Administration (CNSA) is advancing rapidly in civil space—building international partnerships, conducting science aboard the Tiangong space station, and returning samples from the far side of the Moon. While the United States has achieved some of these goals, others we are still actively pursuing. Without stable or increased funding in FY26, the U.S. risks ceding leadership in space—undermining both homeland security and our future in space exploration.

The robust space policies set forth by the first Trump Administration and continued under the Biden Administration invigorated and reaffirmed the position of America’s space industry as an essential partner in driving a new era of space innovation. The health of the space economy depends on the government’s recognition that complex space programs require multi-year planning, steady budgets across a balance portfolio, and good faith collaboration with the private sector and international partners.

President Trump’s bold vision to pursue the stars, launch American astronauts, and plant the Stars and Stripes on Mars is ambitious and achievable. However, realizing this vision will require a carefully crafted strategy and a commitment to both safety and efficiency to overcome the technical challenges on the path to Mars. Attempting to accelerate the timeline will demand stronger coordination across government and industry, sustained investment, and a renewed focus on innovation in spaceflight systems and mission architecture.

The proposed budgetary reductions and decision to cancel the Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion programs after Artemis III will force an unnecessary program reset, ultimately delaying our timeline for returning to the Moon and advancing to Mars. These cuts would also jeopardize long-standing, strategic international partnerships and undercut the cost savings achieved through leveraging the capabilities and expertise from win-win space partnerships with our allies. At this critical junction, our efforts must build upon and accelerate the widely adopted architecture and mission plans within the existing Moon to Mars framework.

Furthermore, dramatic swings in priorities undermine strategic private investment in the space industrial base and jeopardize future supply chain capacity particularly for Commercial LEO Destinations and follow-on commercial science missions, which are critical to ensuring the U.S. fosters commercial innovation and preserves our leadership in space-based research and technology development.

The proposed \$18.8 billion NASA budget for FY26, a 24.3 percent reduction from FY25 levels, would be detrimental to the renowned reputation of the United States in space exploration, science, earth science, technology research, and STEM education. Moreover, a 50 percent reduction in NASA's science funding would severely hinder the United States' ability to lead in groundbreaking scientific discoveries, such as searching for new life forms in deep space. Notably, NASA and other science agencies play a crucial role in ensuring that Americans lead as the world's top space scientists, engineers, and technical experts. Ongoing efforts to reduce the federal workforce, combined with these cuts, threaten thousands of highly skilled jobs and may push America's brightest minds to seek opportunities overseas.

We urge Congress to adopt a NASA budget aligned with the NASA Transition Act of 2025, appropriating no less than \$25.5 billion to the agency.¹ This funding is crucial to ensure NASA continues developing space exploration elements under the science, space technology, International Space Station operations, and Moon to Mars programs. This budgetary framework also includes maintaining course on the Artemis Program and safeguarding efforts where industry actors, both small and large, have invested billions of dollars over the years to ensure American leadership in space including the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope, Mars Sample Return, and the Lunar Gateway space station. Equally important are investments in a full spectrum of commercial capabilities that enable resilient operations and future mission success across all domains, not just exploration. These emerging services are critical to U.S. competitiveness and must be meaningfully supported through targeted programs and funding mechanisms.

We also urge Congress to adopt a NOAA budget commensurate with funding levels since FY24, appropriating no less than \$1.7 billion for NOAA's space programs.² Potential cuts to the Department of Commerce and NOAA would impair critical activities in agriculture support, disrupt weather and disaster monitoring accuracy, and slow research and development in space technology.

In addition, cuts to the Office of Space Commerce (OSC) would undermine the health of the U.S. space industry by reducing its efficacy and eliminating the infrastructure needed to ensure a secure, predictable, and resilient space operating environment. Halting operations of the Traffic Coordination System for Space (TraCSS), a program overseen by the OSC, would challenge the ability of private satellite operators to safely operate their fleets and coordinate with one another to avoid catastrophic collisions in space ultimately undermining delivery of space-based services to the American people and the American economy. These investments are also critical for supporting the integration of commercial space mobility and servicing capabilities, which will be key to future civil and commercial operations.

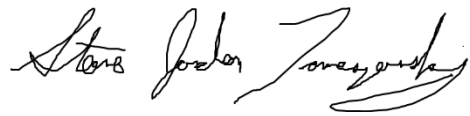
Public-private partnership with the space industry is the hallmark of our space program, enabling the most successful civil space missions the world has ever known. These missions, along with the resources, structures, and people that support them, are essential for sustaining the space dominance the U.S. has experienced over the past 60 years. Looking ahead to the next 60 years, protecting investments in both NASA and NOAA today will bolster American civil, national security, and commercial space programs that are essential for defeating China's space program, ensure the safety of Americans, drive technological advancements, create new economic opportunities, and inspire future generations.

We thank the Committee for its longstanding support of civil space programs and ask that these programs receive adequate funding to continue their critical role in continuing a legacy of American space power.

¹ See AIA's letter to the Leadership of the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (May 13, 2025).

² See AIA's letter to the Leadership of the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (May 13, 2025).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steven Jordan Tomaszewski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" being the most prominent.

Steven Jordan Tomaszewski
Vice President, Space Systems
Aerospace Industries Association