



May 13, 2025

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

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 Chairman Moran, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Van Hollen, and Ranking Member Meng:

The Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), representing nearly 300 aerospace manufacturers and suppliers and more than 2.2 million U.S. workers, urges Congress to support increased and sustainable funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget. Accordingly, AIA respectfully requests that Congress utilize the funding levels included in S.933, the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2025, as a floor in FY26, funding NASA at no less than \$25.507 billion. In addition, we request that NOAA's space accounts be funded at no less than \$1.7 billion, in line with funding levels since FY24.

Congress' long-standing bipartisan support for increased NASA budgets enabled the groundbreaking science, exploration, and technology accomplishments we have achieved over the last decade. Sustained investments in our space programs have provided foundational support for future achievements, and following the budgetary framework of the NASA Transition Authorization Act will continue to bolster our space capabilities. Moreover, the growth of NOAA's space activities has provided vital datasets to manage interagency action and commercial operations, namely through the Traffic Coordination System for Space (TraCSS) under the Office of Space Commerce (OSC). To maintain this progress, funding for NOAA's space programs should be preserved in FY26.

To keep these critical programs on track and defend our leadership in space, Congress should resolve to protect and strengthen such programs across a balanced portfolio with continued bicameral, bipartisan support.

#### **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**

*Deep Space Exploration Systems* – Support funding of no less than \$7.648 billion to invest in:

- NASA's Artemis Moon to Mars program with the goal to send humans to the surface of Mars enabled by human exploration of the cislunar vicinity and lunar surface by 2026. Key program elements that should be continued include Gateway, Orion Crew Vehicle, Space Launch System (SLS), and Exploration Upper Stage, Exploration Ground Systems, including VAB high bays for SLS and Mobile Launcher-2, Human Lander Systems, Exploration Space Suits, deep space environmental control and life support systems, and required ground and communications systems.
- Expanded Gateway Logistics Services to enable dissimilar redundancy for the provision of cargo to Gateway.

*Space Operations* – Support funding of no less than \$4.473 billion to invest in:

- NASA’s Commercial Low Earth Orbit Destinations (CLD) program and NASA efforts to enable commercial activity in low Earth orbit.
- The International Space Station (ISS) and accompanying transportation and research activities to 2030 or until there is a viable CLD to maintain a constant American presence in Low Earth orbit.
- NASA’s Space Communications and Navigation’s goal to migrate the Near Space Network away from government-owned assets by using commercial space communications services and capabilities to provide new technology and capacity for NASA missions.
- Use of the Venture-Class Acquisition of Dedicated and Rideshare (VADR) program for all eligible smallsat launch procurements, providing new opportunities for science and technology payloads and fostering the U.S. commercial launch market.

*Science* – Support funding of no less than \$7.575 billion to invest in:

- A balanced set of activities across space science disciplines, including research and analysis programs, technology development, small-, medium-, and large-sized space science missions, and suborbital research activities.
- Decadal survey priorities, including the Roman Space Telescope, Earth Systems Observatory, Geospace Dynamics Constellation (GDC), and recommendations for increased small satellite use in programs such as Astrophysics Pioneers.
- NASA’s use of commercial capabilities to meet the objectives of the Mars Sample Return mission to align with Decadal Survey budget estimates.
- NASA science and human spaceflight collaboration with the Lunar Discovery and Exploration Program and Commercial Lunar Payload Services programs.
- A new Great Observatories Mission and Technology Maturation Program to formulate several major overlapping space missions to maintain U.S. leadership in space science, the first being the Habitable Worlds Observatory capable of searching for life on planets orbiting stars in our galactic neighborhood.
- Microgravity research aboard suborbital and orbital research platforms, including the use of human participants to support NASA-funded research.
- Earth science data use and applications, including leveraging commercial capabilities and partnerships to enhance data sets and data analysis.
- Continued progress on Earth Science missions including the Geosynchronous Littoral Imaging and Monitoring Radiometer (GLIMR).
- The continuation of data collection programs of record under the Landsat program and further development of Landsat Next.
- A dedicated survey mission to accomplish the objectives of the George E. Brown Near-Earth Object Survey Act.
- The Planetary Defense office and development of a near-earth object and planetary defense roadmap.
- The Biological and Physical Sciences (BPS) funding increase to access research in space which cannot be done on Earth, and to enact the CERISS (Commercially Enabled Rapid Space Science) initiative, taking advantage of the growth of the commercial space industry and further expansion of BPS research opportunities.
- A Space Weather Research and Applications Program to support research to operations and improve modeling, forecasting, and prediction of space weather phenomena.
- Data science and management initiatives to expand data analytic capabilities.

*Space Technology* – Support funding of no less than \$1.181 billion to successfully fund the breadth of activities in the portfolio, including:

- Investment in nuclear propulsion and surface power systems; solar electric propulsion demonstrations; small satellite technologies; large scale additive manufacturing; in-space servicing, assembly, and manufacturing; in-situ resource utilization; competitively selected technology demonstrations, and the Flight Opportunities Program.
- Support for the Flight Opportunities program to fund payloads for research, technology development, and educational opportunities that support NASA’s missions. A funding increase will allow NASA to leverage commercial suborbital capabilities to provide a pipeline for frequent and cost-effective microgravity research to be conducted in support of NASA’s missions.
- Ensuring sufficient funding to support the transition of ISAM capabilities from government-led programs like OSAM-1 to commercial led solutions. Leverage GSFC’s test facilities and workforce

to enable industry-led technology development in on-orbit refueling capabilities, on-orbit servicing, and debris removal.

- Advancing Competitive Tipping Points solicitations that leverage industry investment in early- and mid-stage technologies in cislunar/lunar surface infrastructure and capabilities, in-space servicing, assembly and manufacturing technologies, and Martian infrastructure and capabilities.
- Fully funding NASA's Nuclear Thermal Propulsion program at the highest possible funding within the Space Technology account and continue support for the joint flight demonstration with DARPA's DRACO program.
- Providing the highest possible funding for the development of high-power nuclear electric propulsion demonstration.
- Providing no less than the allocated amount in the FY24 Consolidated Appropriations Act for the development of a lightweight fission surface power system to be demonstrated by 2032.
- Prioritizing funding for in-space research and development and on-orbit demonstrations of active debris removal (ADR) technologies with a focus on near-term mission.
- Expanding capacity and capability of the U.S. space solar cell, panel, and array industrial base, reducing the nation's dependence on foreign suppliers.
- Investing in research and development, orbital debris measurement, tracking, modeling, mitigation, remediation, conjunction analysis, and collision avoidance to advance the sustainability of the space environment for the future of civil and commercial activities in space.
- Providing the highest possible funding for NASA's Fission Surface Power program to support the development and subsequent deployment of affordable fission nuclear power systems in space.

*Aeronautics* – Support funding of no less than \$965.8 million, including:

- The Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) National Campaign, autonomy, and airspace integration research and partnerships.
- A range of technology demonstrators to advance aircraft systems, structures, and engine designs to prepare for the next generation of aircraft, including the recently announced Sustainable Flight Demonstrator.
- NASA research and flight demonstration technologies needed for U.S. global leadership in hypersonics, including the development of endothermic fuels for High-Mach Turbine Engine aircraft.
- The Sustainable Flight National Partnership that incorporates research and demonstration efforts to advance sustainable aviation, including subsonic aircraft, engine design and technology, high-rate composites and ceramic matrix composites for wings and fuselages, cabin structures and engine cores and nacelles, sustainable aviation fuels, future energy sources including Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and hydrogen, and electric and hybrid-electric propulsion that will lead to emissions and noise reductions.

*STEM Engagement* – Support funding of no less than \$143.5 million to invest an independent STEM engagement program.

*Safety, Security, and Mission Services* – Support funding of no less than \$3.044 billion to invest in long overdue maintenance and upgrades identified by NASA under the NASA 2040 activity, including projects that will increase energy efficiency, modernize communal aging and outdated infrastructure, and protect against growing weather threats like hurricanes at NASA centers and facilities where key ISS, Artemis, aeronautics, and science systems are built, tested, processed, and launched.

## **NOAA Space Programs**

- Maintain FY24 funding levels for NOAA satellite systems to enable NOAA's next-generation weather satellite program that enhances the nation's economy, security, environment, and quality of life.
- Fully fund the Office of Space Commerce at FY24 levels to fulfill civil space traffic coordination requirements, license U.S. commercial remote sensing satellites, and serve as an interagency U.S. space industry advocate.
- Retain and fund the Traffic Coordination for Space Systems (TraCSS), a vital component of the Office of Space Commerce's efforts to support the growth of the U.S. space industry by maintaining a secure, predictable, and efficient space operating environment.
- Promote the use of commercial providers for satellite life-extension missions that enable continued operation of critical weather and data satellites.

- Complete the Near Earth Observation Network QuickSounder mission as a pathfinder to a lower cost, high performance low-Earth orbit weather monitoring constellation to succeed the Joint Polar Satellite System.

AIA and our member companies thank you for your leadership and your consideration of our funding priorities for NASA and NOAA. We are available to discuss any of these recommendations at your convenience.

Respectfully,

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