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**Subject: NASA Budget Update**

**Date:** Monday, February 1, 2010 3:51 PM

**From:** Bob Mitchell <Bob@bayareahouston.com>

**To:** Harriet Lukee <Harriet@bayareahouston.com>

Dear Members:

As most of you know, President Obama has proposed that NASA's Constellation Program be cancelled. This is not good for our region, state or nation. I feel very strongly, should this happen, the NASA that we know today will be non-existent in the future. While it is always good to review and make changes from time to time, I do not believe a change this drastic should occur. The last time a change of this magnitude was made with NASA was when President Nixon canceled the Apollo program. I do not need to remind any of us how long it took to recover from that change.

We must and will focus on local jobs and how the impact that a decision of this nature will affect us. However, we must also make this a national issue revolving around leadership, technology and education along with jobs. Are we willing to hand over our leadership in space to Russia, India or China? I can assure you that if we move forward with the recommendations, the gap between the retirement of the shuttle and another American launch vehicle will be expanded by 10 or more years. There is little doubt in my mind that the Russians, Indians and Chinese are sitting back saying to themselves, "It is ours to lose, and we do not need to worry about the Americans."

While this may sound a bit extreme, it is my firm belief that if we give up our leadership in space, we give up our leadership in the world. Americans' strength and leadership revolve around technology, and NASA provides us the avenue to maintain the advantage in new technology and innovation. It is said time and time again that we must get young people inspired to take science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) classes. What inspires more than space exploration?

...OK, I will get off my soap box and get down to business.

Since last Thursday morning, after the first leak of information from the White House, I have been working on behalf of JSC and the potential fallout due to the administration's budget announcement. I want to keep you updated, and this is what has taken place thus far:

- Last Thursday and Friday I was in Cleveland, Ohio, for the Citizens for Space Exploration planning trip to D.C. in May. The timing was great. We were able to discuss our messaging for the trip and lay the groundwork for what is shaping up to be the most important trip we have ever made to D.C. to deliver our message for a strong, stable, human space flight program.
- I gave a taped interview Thursday with radio station 740 KTRH that was aired during the day on Thursday.
- On Friday
  - Interviewed with KTRH 740 at 7:35 in the morning. Also, snippets of the interview were played throughout the day.
  - Interviewed with Eric Berger of the *Houston Chronicle*.
  - Interviewed with KPRC Channel 2 for its afternoon program.
  - Interviewed with *The Galveston Daily News*.
- Spoke with Congressman Pete Olson's office three times to begin to strategize and share insight from various individual sources.
- Spoke with Senator John Cornyn's office (Saturday/Sunday) to also share information.
- Met Sunday morning with Congressman Olson to begin building a strategy and formulate how we can communicate our activities together.
- Spoke with multiple sources from industry and within NASA, as well as marketing organizations, on multiple occasions over the last 3 1/2 days.
- Today I did live interviews with KUHF radio, Channel 2, Channel 13, Channel 11, Channel 39 and did an interview with the Galveston Daily News.

What lies ahead:

- We will continue to monitor and stay on top of all the information as it is disseminated.
- I will travel to Washington, D.C., Feb. 11th and 12th and have already set up meetings with the following offices: Congressman Olson, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Senator Cornyn, Congressman Ron Paul, Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas (Florida) and Jeff Bingham from Senator David Vitter's office (Louisiana). I will try to set up more meetings over the next couple of days.
- We have scheduled a community wide meeting for Feb. 17th for Congressman Olson to address NASA's budget. We will arrange a private meeting with aerospace executives prior to the briefing. All executive board members will be invited.

- A meeting is in the process of being scheduled with Houston Mayor Annise Parker.

I will do my best to keep you updated on our activities. As Congressman Olson and Jay Guerrero from Senator Cornyn's office said this morning, "This is going to have to be fought in Congress, and we must get the support of more delegations other than just the one from Texas. We have committed to each other that we will work together and make this happen. This is going to be a long battle, and we must start **NOW.**"

**Bob Mitchell, President**

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