

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 8, 2016

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Vice Chairwoman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

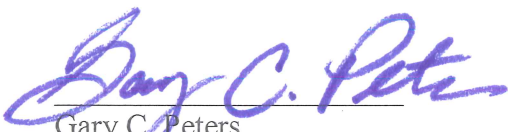
Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski,

Exploring deep space is vital to inspiring future innovators and stimulating the economy through technological advancement. With the Orion spacecraft and Space Launch System (SLS), NASA is building the capability needed to extend human existence throughout deep space. These unparalleled space exploration systems will enable humans to travel farther into the solar system than ever before, spawn new scientific discoveries, and teach us more about our universe.

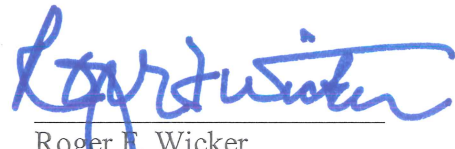
We believe Orion and SLS are the cornerstones of our nation's human space exploration enterprise and a source of national pride. The Orion spacecraft, the SLS rocket, and launch operation systems are already being built, tested, and integrated for Exploration Mission-1 (EM-1) that will launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in 2018. EM-1 will be the first integrated flight test of the new SLS, propelling Orion to the far side of the moon on a three-week mission to test our deep-space capabilities. NASA intends to follow this mission with a crewed deep-space exploration on SLS and Orion in 2021. Additionally, thousands of suppliers across 49 states are building key components for this important new rocket and spacecraft.

We respectfully urge your support for providing the appropriations funding necessary for keeping the first integrated Orion & SLS flight demonstration on track for launch in 2018 and the first crewed flight of Orion & SLS on track for a 2021 launch. The Appropriations Committee has repeatedly worked to ensure that these programs have sufficient funding, and we urge you to continue this commitment in the FY 2017 Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator

April 8, 2016

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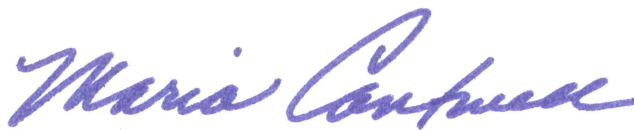
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



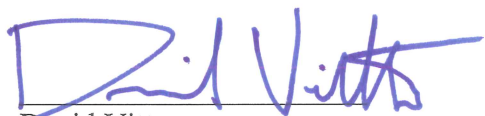
Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



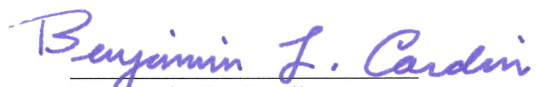
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



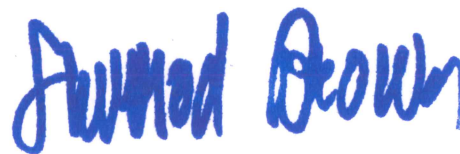
David Vitter  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



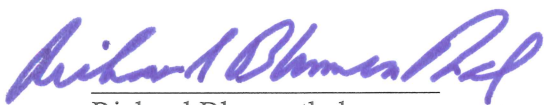
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



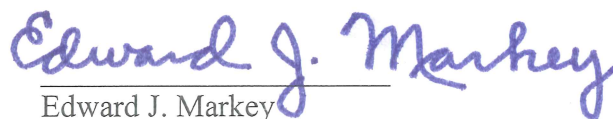
Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



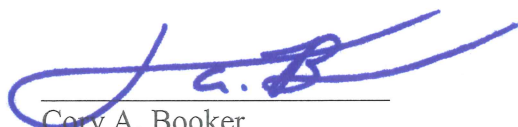
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



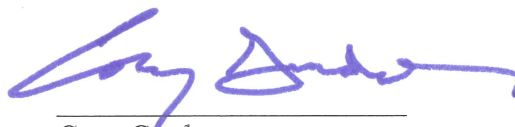
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Cory Gardner  
United States Senator