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August 23, 2013

Senator Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
Capitol Building, S-221
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
Capitol Building, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Barbara Mikulski
Chairman Senate Appropriations
Capitol Building, S-128
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Shelby
Ranking Member Senate Appropriations
Capitol Building, S-146-A
Washington, DC 20510

Representative John Boehner
Speaker of the House
Capitol Building, H-232
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
Capitol Building, H-204
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Hal Rogers
Chairman House Committee on
Appropriations
Capitol Building, H-307
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nita Lowey
Ranking Member House Committee on
Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Frank Wolf
Chairman Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Capitol Building, H-309
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Mikulski, Shelby, and Representatives Boehner, Pelosi, Rogers, Lowey, Wolf, and Fattah:

On behalf of the ASME NASA Task Force, we would like to take this opportunity to express our support for the continuation of funding for the International Space Station (ISS) to 2028 and beyond. As you consider appropriations for FY14 and beyond, we ask that you keep in mind the benefits the ISS offers and the potential benefits it can provide well into the future.

Founded in 1880 as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, ASME is a more than 130,000-member professional organization focused on technical, educational and research issues of the engineering and technology community.

Mechanical engineers have played an important role in the success of NASA and the ISS. The ISS continues to play an important role in research and scientific discovery for the NASA and future space travel. The International Space Station (ISS) serves as a truly unique laboratory. With its research facilities in a microgravity environment, the ISS offers the potential for groundbreaking work in a variety of disciplines, from biomedical research to material science to physics and astronomy.

The international nature of ISS serves as a model for cooperation on future human space exploration missions beyond low Earth orbit. The continuously crewed laboratory enables the ongoing evolution of research and technology objectives and ensures that the benefits of this multinational investment in ISS can be realized.

Under the auspices of an ISS National Laboratory non-profit management organization, the ISS serves as a national resource, to promote opportunities for advancing basic and applied research in science and technology to other U.S. Government agencies, university-based scientists and engineers, and private firms. The National Laboratory management entity is responsible for stimulating, developing, and managing a diversified R&D portfolio using the ISS to address U.S. needs.

With the completion of assembly in 2011, the ISS is transitioning from a focus on assembly to long-term operations and full utilization. A fully operational station allows pursuit of R&D goals which play a key role in economic development, such as human biomedical research and spacecraft technology development, and support continued science and technology leadership

This orbiting research laboratory allows the development, testing, and validation of the next generation of space technologies and operational processes needed to explore beyond low Earth orbit. It also supports a broad array of biological and physical sciences research to advance our knowledge and space flight capabilities. Moreover, the ISS will host Earth and space observation instruments to expand our understanding of our home planet and the solar system and will support advanced engineering research and technology development for space exploration.

Additionally, the ISS serves as the closest analog environment for long-term deep space human exploration. Understanding how humans handle extended exposure to microgravity is a critical to advancing NASA's goals for "Extending and sustaining human activities across the solar system." According to NASA's 2011 Strategic Plan, NASA "make(s) extensive use of our laboratory aboard ISS. With our international partners, we have sustained human presence in low Earth orbit for over a decade, transcending individual nationalism to live, work, and make discoveries in space that benefit us all. Mission by mission, these men and women are

developing capabilities that will allow us to expand human space exploration across the solar system.”

Finally, the ISS inspires the next generation of scientists and explorers by igniting a passion for STEM study and careers. ISS also provides a stable destination to facilitate the growth and evolution of new commercial opportunities, including crew and cargo transportation to low Earth orbit and beyond.

With all of these benefits in mind, we ask that you continue to fund the ISS to 2028 and beyond in order to maximize the potential of the Nation’s newest National Laboratory.

Sincerely,



Andrew Bicos
Co-Chair
ASME NASA Task Force



Philip Spampinato
Co-Chair
ASME NASA Task Force

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