



National Space Society

NSS August 2014 Congressional Home District Blitz Talking Points

COMMERCIAL CREW

NSS strongly supports the current Commercial Crew program to restore America's ability to send astronauts to the ISS and end reliance on Russian vehicles. Particularly given the precarious geo-political situation in Russia, NSS strongly recommends Congress should increase funding of the Commercial Crew program above the President's request. NASA should continue to support multiple domestic Commercial Crew service providers. Healthy competition will improve the program's safety and success and likelihood of staying on schedule and budget.

Commercial Crew: Actions Requested

Support the funding level for the Commercial Crew program in the Senate CJS bill (\$805M) during conference.

Remove language eliminating competition in the Commercial Crew program from the House CJS bill report language during conference.

Remove language imposing FAR cost accounting practices from the Senate CJS bill report language during conference.

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

NSS strongly supports the ISS extension to 2024, and urges that the program be extended to at least 2028. NASA should continue to fully utilize this critical national asset for research and technology development, especially activities that will ultimately lead to deep space human exploration and settlement. Toward this goal, funding for the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS) should be increased to enable additional commercial research on board the ISS. NSS also supports NASA future plans to transition to commercially owned and operated space stations at an appropriate time.

ISS: Actions Requested

Ensure that the ISS program is extended to at least 2024 in the NASA Authorization bill.

Sponsor legislation calling for \$100M of extra money to be spent supporting commercial research on the ISS beyond the 2015 funding level.

SUPPORT COMMERCIAL SPACE

NSS strongly supports the continued development of commercial space industries that are not solely driven by government customers. In addition to on-going support for competition in both the Cargo Resupply Services (CRS) and Commercial Crew (CC) programs, there are four key areas where commercial space needs support.

1. ITAR reforms are needed so that future space technologies are not considered “weapons” by default.
2. The FAA has had a very light regulatory touch on the sub-orbital tourism industry and NSS supports minimal regulation until sub-orbital flight is much better understood. NSS recommends that FAA regulation be delayed for 8 years after the first commercial sub-orbital tourist flight, which has not yet occurred.
3. NASA must be allowed the freedom to use Space Act Agreements and Fixed-Price FAR contracts in such a manner as to best support the development of commercial space.
4. The rights of individuals, corporations and other organizations engaged in extra-terrestrial mining require clarification and support.

Commercial Space: Actions Requested

Support S.2140 (in committee) allowing suborbital reusable launch vehicles to simultaneously conduct both operational and experimental flights.

Ensure that an updated Commercial Space Launch Act delays the authority for FAA to regulate sub-orbital tourism until 8 years after the first commercial flight. This delay is sometimes called the “learning period.” A similar learning period should be put in place for orbital tourism as well.

ASTEROID DETECTION

Millions of objects in space pass through Earth’s orbit. Larger asteroids pose threats ranging from the destruction of a city to eliminating humanity entirely. Current efforts are small compared to the magnitude of the threat, but for very reasonable funding levels we could have a truly excellent program to protect the Earth from an existential threat. The primary initial emphasis should be on detection since we cannot deflect what we cannot see and most of the dangerous asteroids are currently unseen.

Asteroid Detection: Action Requested

Sponsor legislation to add 1% to the NASA budget to protect the Earth from asteroids and comets with a primary emphasis on detection.

For additional details on these positions, please visit www.nss.org/legislative.