

National Space Society Legislative Alert

The National Space Society (NSS) calls on its membership to take action now.

The President's proposed budget for NASA for Fiscal Year 2013 was released in early February. At the end of February, NSS led the space advocacy community to the halls of Congress in the annual grassroots visit known as the "Space Exploration Alliance's Legislative Blitz", during which we met with 100 congressional offices to show strong constituent support for our nation's civil space program. However, the NASA budget is not immune to the unprecedented budgetary pressures facing our nation. Now, more than ever before, it is absolutely critical that the voices of the entire space advocacy community be heard in this debate.

Each of us has an opportunity to directly participate, right now, without going to Washington. But we must act now.

The House of Representatives' Committee on Appropriations allows any and all Congresspersons to submit "programmatic" funding requests to fully fund, increase, or cut the level of funding for any discretionary federal program. For example, with regard to the NASA budget, Members can ask the Appropriations Committee to provide full funding for items such as the "space technology program" or "commercial crew", as only two examples.

The deadline for such requests to be turned in by Members of Congress is just a few days away: Tuesday, March 20th at 5 p.m. EDT. NSS urges you to contact your Member of Congress by the close of business on Monday, March 19th and ask for full support for the NASA budget:

1. Information as to the name and D.C. office phone number of your U.S. Representative can be found by going to the bottom of the Legislative Action page on the NSS website, at <http://www.nss.org/legislative/>, and by entering your zip code.
2. Call your Representative's D.C. office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. EDT.
3. Tell the person who answers the phone that you are a constituent, and ask to speak with the staff member who handles "NASA Appropriations".
4. When you speak with that staffer (or, if you can't reach that staffer, leave a message):
 - a) say that you are a constituent;
 - b) that you would like your Representative to request that the House Appropriations Committee fully fund NASA; and if you have a specific program within NASA that you personally support (such as the "space technology program" or "commercial crew"), tell the staffer which program (see below for more information); and,
 - c) that you request your Representative to submit a Programmatic Funding Request to the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee on the Committee's website (see below) in support.
 - d) In speaking with the staffer, feel free to use any or all of the following points that NSS as an organization supports:

i. The “Talking Points” from the just completed Legislative Blitz, which can be found on the NSS website, at http://www.nss.org/legislative/blitz/2012/SEA_talking_points_2012.pdf.

ii. The similar points raised last fall by the NSS in the “National Space Society’s Call to Action for American Leadership in Civil Space”, which can also be found on our website, at http://www.nss.org/legislative/positions/Call_for_US_Leadership_in_Space.pdf.

iii. Feel free to refer the staffer to the above links.

5. Also ask the staffer if your Representative will commit to supporting NASA and the specific program within the NASA budget that you personally support. Regardless of the response, be respectful and courteous throughout, and thank the staffer for listening and for his/her time.
6. After the call, send an e-mail to Rick Zucker, NSS Executive Vice President (at rick.zucker@nss.org), with your name, the name of your congressperson, the staffer’s name, what the staffer said, and any other comments you might have.

Useful information for you to have at the ready, to help the staffer (two examples given below):

1. The online form that they will need (a “Dear Colleague” request) for the 2013 Fiscal Year program request process is at appropriations.house.gov.

2. Examples of specific programs:

a. To support full funding for “Space Technology”: The “request type” is “Program”. The “Subcommittee/Agency/Account” is “Commerce Justice Science, NASA, Space Technology”. The “Program Title” is “Space Technology”. The “Description” is “R&D in new innovative space technologies to open the space frontier to human exploration, development & settlement”. The “Funding” is “Support the President’s FY2013 budget request”. (They will need to attach a signed letter from your Representative endorsing this and any other requests they are making.)

b. To support full funding for “Commercial Space”: The “request type” is “Program”. The “Subcommittee/Agency/Account” is “Commerce Justice Science, NASA, Exploration”. The “Program Title” is “Commercial Spaceflight, Commercial Crew”. The “Description” is “Develop new U.S. private sector ISS crew transport systems”. The “Funding” is “Support the President’s FY2013 budget request”. (They will need to attach a signed letter from the Representative endorsing this and any other requests they are making.)

This is an opportunity that does not come along very often. Please help support our nation’s civil space program.