



Space Exploration Alliance

2006 Space Blitz Action Plan

Who We Are

The Space Exploration Alliance represents tens of thousands of American taxpayers who care deeply about our space program and who strongly support space exploration and development. SEA is not an industry group, but rather an unprecedented partnership of the nation's premier non-profit space organizations.

SEA Vision

We support the Vision for Space Exploration as a bold and substantial mandate for human and robotic exploration of the solar system that will help assure American technological and scientific preeminence in the 21st century.

Fully Support the Vision's Plan and Financial Requirements

Space exploration and development is and should be a national priority for the United States. The exploration of space drives innovation; increases student interest in science and mathematics; creates jobs; improves national security, and fosters a feeling of wonder among children and adults alike. In addition, it will dramatically increase our knowledge of the universe and begin the process of opening new worlds for humanity. Development and use of the space frontier has and will continue to provide capabilities that directly improve our lives.

The Vision for Space Exploration is about more than exploration and science. It is also about opening the solar system to dramatically improve human well-being and the future of life on Earth.

We now understand that there are specific things that can be done in space, and explicitly cis-lunar space, that will benefit humanity. Our vision is much clearer than it was at the time of Apollo, our technologies are much better developed, and the organizational and financial structures are much better prepared for successful use of space. And we are still improving.

It is critical that the US lead the exploration and development of cis-lunar space, and beyond. Our leadership in satellite communications, earth observation, and space-based navigation has played a major role in maintaining our economic strength and security, and our leadership in the development of the next space frontiers is no less important.

RECOMMENDATION: Congress should provide at least an additional \$1.1 billion for NASA's budget over the President's request. These funds will enable NASA to implement the full mandate of the 2005 NASA Authorization Act.

- The total level of funding for NASA should be at least the \$17.9 billion of the authorization bill versus the \$16.8 billion in the President's request.
- Congress should strongly consider using a guide of one percent of the federal budget for future out-year NASA appropriations. This level was met or exceeded throughout the post-Apollo era until the mid-nineties. The current level has shrunk to 0.7%.

RECOMMENDATION: Congress should direct the use of additional funds to enable NASA to connect current exploration work with the future human exploration of Mars.

RECOMMENDATION: Congress should help NASA continue to involve the entrepreneurial and commercial communities by protecting the budget lines for innovative procurement programs such as Commercial Orbital Transportation Services (COTS) and the Centennial Challenges program.

- The Centennial Challenges program uses the proven mechanism of prizes to encourage innovation by capitalizing on American ingenuity, to ensure that NASA only pays for demonstrated capabilities, and to vastly reduce overhead costs.
- The COTS program allows space entrepreneurs to provide private transportation services to the International Space Station. The US must utilize these entrepreneurs, and that is exactly what COTS is going to do. Congress should fully fund COTS at \$120 million in FY2007, and should maintain or increase NASA's planned COTS funding commitment of \$500 million through FY2009.

RECOMMENDATION: Congress should ensure that the NASA budget is balanced and includes adequate funding for space science programs, including, but not limited to the Terrestrial Planet Finder (TPF) mission, a dedicated probe of Jupiter's moon Europa, and the Stratospheric Observatory For Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA).

- These first two missions are among the most exciting programs connected to astrobiology – the search for life in the universe. SOFIA is a unique international astronomical observatory and test bed for cutting-edge technology and instrumentation useful in future space missions and ground-based observations.

RECOMMENDATION: Congress should recognize the critical role of NASA and space exploration in American competitiveness. NASA has been a driver of new technologies and capabilities that have changed our lives for the better, and an inspiration for millions of American scientists and engineers. Bills moving through Congress now to explicitly recognize this connection should be supported.