



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

May 26, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As we begin work on the NASA reauthorization bill for fiscal year 2011 (FY 2011), I write to inform you of my intention to include language authorizing an additional space shuttle flight.

As you know, Space Shuttle Atlantis will be prepared as a "launch on need" rescue mission supporting the last scheduled flight of the space shuttle (STS-134) in early FY 2011. If a rescue mission for STS-134 is not flown, it could be used instead for an additional shuttle mission. This new mission, STS-135, would be flown with a minimum crew of four astronauts and would provide critical spare parts and logistics for long-term ISS operations. The mission would be planned for the summer of 2011 and would mark the last flight of the space shuttle program.

Adding this mission will have several additional benefits beyond the logistical advantages described above. It will allow us to more smoothly transition the workforce in Florida and Texas from the space shuttle program to the vision you've set for NASA's future. It will also guarantee U.S. access to space for a longer period of time, and thereby help to close the spaceflight gap until a new domestic capability is provided. Last but not least, it will reduce risk to the station should a major component fail and need to be replaced before STS-135 is flown.

I look forward to working with you to make this important mission a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Nelson".

Bill Nelson