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National Space Society Statement on HR 6063, National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008

Comprehensive Bill Supports Higher Funding, Ambitious Mission for NASA

Washington D.C. – (June 3, 2008) – On the occasion of the full committee markup of the NASA Authorization Act of 2008, the National Space Society released the following statement:

With a Space Shuttle in orbit and multiple robotic probes on Mars, this week highlights the great promise of NASA's potential. It is a fitting time for Congress to consider the NASA Authorization Act of 2008.

Chairman Udall is to be commended for drafting a comprehensive bill that sets forth an ambitious strategic vision for NASA.

The Authorization Act sets out a funding level that matches the ambitious scope of NASA's activities, fully funding exploration, science, space operations, and aeronautics, while accelerating the Constellation program to reduce the looming spaceflight gap.

This is the first NASA authorization bill to be put forward under a Democratic-led Congress since the U.S. Space Exploration Policy was introduced in 2004. As such, it is an important milestone, demonstrating bipartisan support for a space program that reaches outward to the Moon and Mars while supporting climate science, aeronautics research, space science, and ISS utilization.

The visionary bill includes provisions for many programs and themes which have been supported by the NSS. For example, the bill finds that investment in NASA promotes American competitiveness and innovation, improves the quality of life for American citizens and the world, and stimulates student interest in technical subjects. Other sections noted the importance of international cooperation and commercial services, the damaging effect of current export control regulation, the promise of innovation prizes, and the need to better understand the threat of Near Earth Objects.

NSS members were particularly pleased to see the bill include a section on Participatory Exploration, supporting the agency's efforts to fully engage the public with exploration and science missions. This theme will be essential to engaging the next generation of American explorers.



NSS members call on the Science Committee to pass this bill, and for the full Congress to pass a NASA Authorization bill in this session. Not passing a bill will mean that NASA goes into the new Administration without current Congressional authorization, which would be a lost opportunity. NSS also calls on the Appropriation Committees to support this bill with funding commensurate with the authorization bill's scope. With continued support, NASA can continue to achieve its great potential, showcasing the best of America and leading the planet towards a better future.

About the National Space Society

The National Space Society (NSS) is an independent, grassroots organization dedicated to the creation of a spacefaring civilization. Founded in 1974, NSS is widely acknowledged as the preeminent citizen's voice on space. NSS counts thousands of members and over 50 chapters in the United States and around the world. The society also produces the annual International Space Development Conference. For more information on the society or the conference, please visit: <http://www.nss.org>