

For Immediate Release:



**DIRECT Team to Congress: Don't Kill the US Human Space Flight Program
US on Verge of Repeating Apollo Program Mistake**

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Cape Canaveral, Florida

The DIRECT Team is urgently calling on the US House of Representatives to save the US human space flight program by fully adopting the Senate's version of NASA's 2011 budget in today's important vote.

"It is by no means an exaggeration to say the future US human space program is hanging in the balance today," said DIRECT Team founder Ross Tierney. "After months of bipartisan negotiation and agreement among a multitude of competing interests, this is the last real chance to move the FY2011 NASA budget forward and prevent the effective dissolution of the US human space flight program."

The Team fears that if the House refuses to accept the Senate's budget bill, S.3729, the NASA Authorization Act of 2010, during its special stop-gap spending session this week, all the hard-earned agreement on NASA's future will be lost. The ultimate result of not adopting this bill will likely be a cancelled program and a lengthy hiatus in US human space flight; it could even lead to the permanent end of NASA's ability to fly astronauts into space.

Part of the Senate's carefully crafted compromise would direct NASA to build an affordable new launch vehicle adapted directly from the Space Shuttle, very similar to the design DIRECT has advocated since 2006. The Senate bill also funds a new commercial space launch effort that until recently, the House has been reluctant to consider.

Before the House adjourned, it amended its own NASA bill to align more closely with the Senate's language. The House bill, however, was not accepted by the Senate, which had worked for months with all concerned parties to create a compromise bill that was acceptable to everyone. NASA's plans will be frozen under the resulting Continuing Resolution; without an agreement being passed by the House and the Senate this week, that freeze will continue, and future decisions on human space flight will be made after the end of the Shuttle program.

Representative Bart Gordon, outgoing Chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee, on Monday announced his willingness consider the Senate Bill and put it to an immediate vote "For the sake of providing certainty, stability, and clarity to the NASA workforce and larger space community". Nevertheless, the bill will face opposition, particularly from budget-conscious Republicans and the Alabama delegation.

"Are we going to make exactly the same mistake we did after the Apollo Program and simply throw away all of the people, capability, and experience that we have built up over the last 30 years in the Shuttle Program?" Tierney asked. "We are facing that very real scenario this week. We ask that the House pass S.3729 before the Shuttle is retired and tens of thousands of highly capable NASA engineers and technicians lose their jobs. If we end up with a Continuing Resolution, the result will be devastating to the entire industry sector."

About DIRECT:

Since 2006, the DIRECT Team – a volunteer group of advocates and NASA and space-industry engineers – has made the case for reworking the existing Space Shuttle vehicle design and infrastructure into a powerful but cost-effective large launch system, called "Jupiter", which is similar to the vehicle proposed Senate in the bill. The timeline and human-rating needs called for in the Senate plan make it overwhelmingly likely that existing shuttle hardware and facilities will be adapted to create this new launch system, possibly with select updates from the Constellation Program.

For more information, please visit www.directlauncher.com

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