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CHAIRMAN, HOUSE SCIENCE COMMITTEE**

**TESTIMONY TO AVIATION SUBCOMMITTEE  
February 9, 2005**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. I will keep my remarks quite brief so that you can get on with the rest of your business. I just want to use my time to make four simple points regarding commercial human space flight.

First, the issue is important. As I mentioned during the floor debate on the Commercial Space Launch Act Amendments last year, I am a convert to this cause. When our colleague Dana Rohrabacher first started pressing the issue with me, I thought the notion of commercial human space flight was, quite frankly, a silly distraction. But further research by the Committee, not to mention further developments like Burt Rutan's flights to win the Ansari X-Prize have convinced me otherwise. We don't know yet what commercial space flight might lead to, but we need to give this new industry a chance to develop.

That brings me to my second point, which is this: if this new industry is to develop and if innovative technologies are to be pursued, we need to strike the right balance in regulating the industry. The law the President signed last year reflects a year of negotiation and strikes the right balance, protecting the public without stifling the industry.

This is an infant industry; it is not the equivalent of today's airline industry. The law fully protects uninvolved third parties and requires extraordinary disclosures to immediate participants, and it sets the industry on a path toward greater regulation as it develops. That's the right balance and it passed muster with Members who are not exactly in the anti-regulatory camp in both chambers of Congress. The final wording was worked out between my staff and Senator Hollings' staff.

Now, we need to ensure that the FAA is implementing the law properly, which is my third point. Our Committee is watching this process like a hawk. The law needs to be implemented by the Commercial Space side of FAA in the balanced manner intended. Obviously, the Commercial Aircraft side of FAA can inform the process, but implementation is not a commercial aircraft venture.

I look forward to working with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, on which I also serve to make sure we get this right – and that's my fourth point. Our Committees share jurisdiction over the human portion of the commercial space flight industry. We must not allow disputes between our Committees to magnify any rivalries within FAA or elsewhere. We need to move together to implement a balanced and predictable regulatory regime quickly and effectively. The T&I Committee was helpful in clearing the law for passage last year, and I hope we can move forward in that same spirit.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, let me just say that this is a much more complicated issue than it appears at first blush. We learned that the hard way in a year of discussions with a small but fractious industry. But thanks to the new law, we now have a clear blueprint to move forward in a way that will protect the public while helping a new industry get on its feet. I look forward to working with you and this entire panel as the new law is implemented. Thank you.