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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

July 20, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC, 20500

Dear President Obama:

The Space Shuttle program has been a source of national pride and inspiration for the last 30 years. The return of Atlantis this week marks the end of the Shuttle era and the beginning of a new period where the US will no longer be able to launch humans into space on US vehicles. The US will be forced to rely on Russia and other foreign countries for our human space flight needs.

Human spaceflight enables discoveries in science and technology of great value while inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers who will power our economic future. I am hopeful the Administration will direct NASA to make every effort to speed up development of the Orion Multi-purpose Crew Vehicle and the Space Launch System (SLS), so we can embark on a new era of American dominance in human spaceflight.

I applaud NASA's decision last month to accept the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle design for the Multi-purpose Crew vehicle to be used in deep space. This is a huge step in the right direction and great news for Colorado. Orion supports thousands of good paying Colorado jobs, and it is an engine for innovation and private sector economic growth with ripple effects throughout the state.

The next decision for NASA must be to lay out the design and plans for the SLS. Orion and the SLS are national priorities assuring the US continued access to the International Space Station.

We need to ensure Orion and the SLS are fully supported and ready to fly when we need them. Thank you for your support for continued human space exploration beyond Earth's orbit, so America will remain the leader in space exploration.

Sincerely,

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress