



**News release**

Contact: Kathryn Cooper  
Communications Manager  
P.O. Box 58724  
Houston, Texas 77258-8724  
Phone: 281.486.5535  
Fax: 281.486.5068  
Email: [kathryn@bayareahouston.com](mailto:kathryn@bayareahouston.com)  
Visit: [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## BAHEP delegation targets key members of Congress in support of human space exploration

**BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS** – In response to the cancellation of NASA’s human space exploration program proposed by the administration in its FY 2011 federal budget, a team of concerned citizens, led by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, traveled to Capitol Hill March 23-25 where they made 71 visits to congressional offices in just two days.

Their mission was to impress upon decision makers in Congress the importance of “finding common ground on a forward-looking plan for America that maintains America’s national leadership and security, protects jobs and small businesses, inspires America’s children to pursue science and math related careers, and allows Americans to continue to enjoy a quality of life second to none.”

“This trip was a phenomenal accomplishment,” stated Bob Mitchell, president of the organization. “In just five weeks, we targeted meetings with approximately 80 key members of Congress who sit on appropriations, science and budget committees. Their support of human space exploration is vital to the future of NASA. In a very brief span of time, we were able to speak with 81 percent of the targeted members and their staff.” The 30-member delegation included Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia, Friendswood Mayor David J. H. Smith, Seabrook City Councilmen Paul Dunphey and Kim Morrell, representatives from the Greater Houston Partnership, as well as travelers from Alabama, Florida, and Ohio.

While in Washington, Mitchell and David Braun, BAHEP aerospace marketing manager, also attended congressional hearings given by the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee’s subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science. Mitchell stated that during the hearings they observed an extreme amount of pushback from committee members to the proposed budget. Mitchell reported, “Throughout the day, the committee questioned the wisdom of the administration in formulating a drastic shift to the future of NASA and human space exploration without having first consulted with the experts who deal with these issues on a day-to-day basis.”

When asked if he felt the delegation accomplished its mission, he replied, “For a long time, we’ve been pushing this big ball uphill, and now we have the ball rolling downhill. There is a huge amount of

congressional support for this, and their votes are what will determine the end result. I feel very positive about the outcome, but our work is not done. To be successful, we must double our efforts until that last vote is cast.”

For more information about BAHEP’s initiatives in support of NASA’s human space flight program, visit [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com) or [www.goboldlynasa.org](http://www.goboldlynasa.org).

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**The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership** is a member-driven organization that provides the leadership to stimulate regional economic development and employment in southeast Texas. Its members include more than 260 investor companies, business professionals, local governments, and educational institutions encompassing 13 cities, Galveston and Harris counties, and the Port of Houston Authority. Visit [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com).

**Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program** is administered by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. It is a State of Texas funded initiative designed to transfer the knowledge and technology of the U.S. Space Program to small businesses to solve technical challenges they are unable to solve themselves. Visit [www.spacetechnolutions.com/bahep](http://www.spacetechnolutions.com/bahep).