



News release

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Congressmen declare importance of national initiative to save NASA's human spaceflight program

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – The Aerospace Advisory Committee of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership met with Congressmen Frank Wolf and John Culberson on Monday, March 8, to discuss the elimination of NASA's human spaceflight program from the FY2011 federal budget that the White House presented to Congress on Feb. 1.

Wolf sits on the powerful House Appropriations Committee where he is the lead Republican on the Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittee. He is serving his 15th term in Congress representing the 10th District of Virginia.

Culberson was elected in 2000 to represent the 7th District of Texas. He is also a member of the House Appropriations Committee, serving on the Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittee.

Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, introduced the congressmen to the luncheon gathering of aerospace executives held at Bailey's American Grille in Seabrook. Mitchell and his organization have been spearheading a national effort to reinstate funding for NASA's human spaceflight program into the FY '11 budget.

Mitchell turned the floor over to Culberson, a passionate supporter of NASA, who stated, "More than anything else that we do in government, the work you do in America's space program has the ability to touch and inspire the human heart – especially the young people – in a way that nothing else can." He told the group that Congress will make the final decision on the budget, and, in particular, the decision will come out of the Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittee. "Appropriations is what drives this," Culberson declared.

Before closing he said, "More than any other reason, this is why the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership was created. The people in this room are the key leaders in the space industry. More than any other group, you all are best able to get the grass roots movement going around the country to educate people and let them know how serious this is."

Culberson then introduced Wolf saying, "America's space program has no better friend than Congressman Frank Wolf."

Wolf concerned about future of country

As he began speaking to the group whose livelihood depends in no small part on the actions about to be taken by the Appropriations Committee, Congressman Wolf expressed, “I’ve been in Congress for 30 years, and I’ve never been more concerned about the future of our country. Our nation, whether you’d like to acknowledge it or not, is falling behind. The thought of ceding over our leadership in space to other countries with different values is frightening. It’s a national defense issue in addition to an issue that affects many other areas.”

Wolf stressed that NASA’s human spaceflight program is an issue of leadership for America. He noted that Spain, France, and Great Britain were all world leaders at some point in history and added, “The 20th century was the American century. If we don’t do things differently in math, physics, chemistry, biology and space to electrify this nation, the 21st century will not be the American century. It could be the Indian century, but it will probably be the Chinese century.”

Although the impact that the proposed change to the NASA budget will have on jobs is important, Wolf said, it is especially important to educate Congress and the American public on how this impacts our country – what it means to our future, what it means to our children, what it means to our grandchildren. He emphasized that the more scientists and former astronauts speak out in support of NASA the better. Wolf made it clear that it’s also important for those without ties to the space industry to make their voices heard.

Wolf states importance of immediacy

In closing, Wolf cautioned, “Whatever you do, don’t hold your firepower back for any mythical date that may take place. The future on this issue is really now. This will be won or lost over the next 30 or 60 days. Whatever efforts you’re making, the time to do it is now. Decline is a choice. A great nation or an individual declines or not based on a choice they make.”

Mitchell ended the meeting by explaining to the congressmen that BAHEP had been actively working for several weeks to garner national support for this initiative. Details on this work and information on joining the effort can be found at www.bayareahouston.com.



Congressman John Culberson, left, listens intently as Congressman Frank Wolf tells the members of the Aerospace Advisory Committee of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, “I’ve been in Congress for 30 years, and I’ve never been more concerned about the future of our country.”

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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.

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.spacetechsolutions.com/bahep.