COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, STATE, JUSTICE,
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April 8, 2005

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman, Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations
H-309, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Ranking Member, Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations
H-309, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Mollohan,

As you being consideration of the FY2006 appropriations bills, I am respectfully submitting the following requests for funding from the Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations.

I am reserving my top three priorities for NASA, which I will submit at a later date.

My fourth priority is $300,000 from the Department of Justice, Local Law Enforcement Account for the Texas Department of Public Safety's Border Security Network. These funds will enhance the integration of federal, state, and local homeland security efforts along the Texas border and provide critically needed technology improvements and information sharing

My fifth priority is $5 million from the Department of Justice, Crime Lab Improvement Program for the Texas Department of Public Safety's Biometric Facial Identification/Comparison System. This cutting-edge technology will enable the digital plotting of facial features for identification and comparison of subjects and suspects. It will be an asset to homeland security and prevent the attainment of multiple drivers licenses for purposes of fraud or criminal evasion.

My sixth priority is $500,000 from the Department of Justice, Crime Lab Improvement Program or Crime Identifications Technology Grants for the Texas Department of Public Safety's DNA/Forensics Laboratory. The funding will add increased training capability to reduce the backlog and increase the number of certified labs.

My seventh priority is $300,000 from the Department of Justice, COPS Meth Enforcement and Clean-Up Account for the Texas Department of Public Safety's Clan Lab Clean-Ups. The funds will provide equipment and portable facilities, enabling the Department to provide portable response to clandestine methamphetamine labs that contain hazardous materials that are toxic to the public.

I strongly support the President's budget request to provide $57.92 million for the Scientific Ocean Drilling Vessel within the National Science Foundation's Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction account. This vessel will be critical to the success of the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program, an international effort to deliver cutting edge science in areas such as understanding earthquakes and other natural hazards, identifying potentially important new sources of natural resources and energy, and extending the available record of our planet's history and climate. I am respectfully requesting that the full amount in the President's budget be provided for this important program.

I am asking that the Subcommittee reinstate funding for the Department of Justice's State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAPP), to the fullest extent possible. SCAAP funding has helped alleviate the strain that criminal alien offenders place on our state and local governments by providing partial reimbursement for the cost of incarcerating them. The federal government is responsible for ensuring that our borders are secure, yet states and localities have shouldered the lion's share of costs associated with incarcerating aliens when they enter the criminal justice system. Failing to provide adequate funding for a criminal alien population that is the federal government's responsibility places undue burden on state and local criminal justice systems.

I am also asking the Subcommittee to increase funding for the National Science Foundation, to the fullest extent possible. Science is our national insurance policy for the future, and the great work of the scientists and researchers at NSF is indispensable. I am also deeply concerned about the transfer of the Coast Guard ice breakers to the National Science Foundation. The annual cost of breaking ice to keep the shipping lanes open in the Antarctic will place an undue strain on an already slim NSF budget. I am respectfully requesting that these vessels remain the property of the Coast Guard.

I am dedicated to reducing the deficit and the national debt, and funding only those programs and projects that are absolutely essential. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my requests, and I look forward to continuing my work as a member of your Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

John Culberson

John Culberson
Member of Congress

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April 22, 2005

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman, Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations
H-309, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Ranking Member, Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations
H-309, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Mollohan,

I am writing to request that our Subcommittee increase funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation. In particular, I would recommend to you and our colleagues on the Subcommittee that we increase funding for two vitally important, but largely unknown programs within NASA.

First, I request that our Subcommittee increase funding for Project Prometheus by $300 million in this year's appropriations bill. This figure represents the amount of money cut out of the Project Prometheus budget over the last two years from the funding levels appropriated by Congress for this vitally important program. Project Prometheus is the only research program underway in the United States to develop America's next generation of rocket propulsion. Without Project Prometheus, our entire space program will be forced to continue to rely upon chemical rocket propulsion systems, which is the equivalent of leaving our nation's naval forces to rely upon coal-fired steam boilers to propel their ships. Project Prometheus has been wholeheartedly endorsed by President George W. Bush as a part of his Vision for Space Exploration, yet the increasing cost of returning the shuttle to flight and building out the space station coupled with NASA's limited resources led NASA's previous Administrator to move $300 million, which was appropriated specifically for Project Prometheus, out of that program and into other areas.

I have done extensive research and personal investigation into the merits and need for Project Prometheus, and I am absolutely convinced that Congress must step forward and make this significant investment, as promised by the President and the Congress, to ensure that our nation's

space program will not be saddled with out-of-date rocket propulsion as we move into the 21st Century. The ion propulsion technology being developed by Project Prometheus will not only be vitally important to the future of our unmanned space program, but it will also be essential for the success and safety of future manned missions to the planets and beyond. Astronauts on interplanetary missions will be exposed to dangerous and potentially deadly doses of radiation, which will require designers to add massive, heavy and expensive shielding to future spacecraft. However, the ion propulsion engine developed by Project Prometheus will reduce the travel time to Mars, for example, to 60 days instead of the six or seven months that is currently required using chemical rocket technology. Obviously, this reduced trip time will benefit the astronauts lives, health, and safety, and it will also reduce the size, mass, and cost of future interplanetary missions.

As a part of this request for Project Prometheus, I will also be submitting Subcommittee report language which would direct NASA to stay focused on maintaining the launch schedule promised by President Bush for the Jupiter Icy Moons Orbiter Mission (JIMO). The Jupiter Icy Moons Orbiter Mission and its exploration of the Galilean moon Europa are the highest priority of planetary scientists. Every ten years, the National Academy of Sciences conducts a Decadal Study to identify and recommend the highest priority space exploration missions from the perspective of the scientific community. Jupiter's moon, Europa, is the single highest priority for exploration because it is the only planetary body in the solar system, other than Earth, which has a saltwater ocean and all of the other fundamental elements necessary for the development of life. President Bush recognized the importance of exploring Europa, on which he set forth as a part of his Vision for Space Exploration a mission to Europa, with a launch date of 2014 as the first major mission for Project Prometheus. The President's 2004 and 2005 budget requests anticipated and budgeted for this final Europa mission as a part of Project Prometheus, and Congress funded these requests. In last year's appropriations bill, with the support of the Appropriations Committee, Majority Leader Tom DeLay, and NASA, I included report language which spelled out the importance of Project Prometheus. For all of these reasons, Mr. Chairman, I strongly recommend that the Subcommittee increase funding for Project Prometheus by $300 million in this year's appropriations bill.

Second, I am requesting an increase of $55 million for the Space Interferometry Mission (SIM). This vitally important space mission has been on track for a launch in 2010, however, it has just sustained a cut of $55 million, which will seriously endanger the program and postpone its launch date. This mission is vitally important because it will be able to detect Earth-sized planets around other stars, and thus narrow the range of target stars for the Terrestrial Planet Finder telescope, which will be launched in the next decade. Without SIM, the Terrestrial Planet Finder telescope will not have the time or the targeting ability to identify which stars among the many hundreds of thousands in our vicinity have Earth-type planets around them.

Third, I would request that the Subcommittee increased funding for the National Science Foundation by at least $100 million. I know that you are as disturbed as I am by the Administration's budget recommended funding levels for the National Science Foundation, coupled with the Administration's unilateral decision to transfer the expensive responsibility of maintaining and upgrading the Coast Guard's icebreaker fleet to the National Science Foundation. Our nation's investment in scientific research is as essential to our national security

as is our investment in our nation's military. In many ways, our strong investment in scientific and medical research is even more important than military investments for long-term security and prosperity of America. I would encourage you and the Subcommittee to allow the National Science Foundation to use this, or whatever funding increase we can get them, to help fund the many grant applications they receive.

Finally, I hope that the Subcommittee can find room to increase funding for NASA's Ames Research Center. Ames is responsible for many of the essential core competencies which NASA must preserve for the future to ensure the success of our nation's space program. I have visited Ames, talked with their director and key staff, and researched their work carefully. The cuts that NASA is proposing for Ames will damage the ability of that research facility to carry out its work, and I hope the Subcommittee will restore some or all of these cuts.

NASA is not proposing any cuts for the Johnson Space Center in Houston, although I want to express my strong support for preserving the vitality and ability of the Johnson Space Center to support our manned space program.

I do not physically represent the Johnson Space Center or the Jet Propulsion Laboratory or the Ames Research Center. I strongly support efforts to control federal spending and balance our federal budget, and I am personally engaged on a daily basis in finding ways to cut spending or prevent wasteful spending. I have always submitted only the very best spending proposals at the minimum dollar level needed to the Appropriations Committee on the basis of merit and necessity. I sincerely hope that you and our Subcommittee will do everything in our power to move money from nonessential programs from the Department of Commerce, for example, to find the necessary funds to make these absolutely essential investments in our nation's space program and the National Science Foundation.

Thank you for your attention to these important requests and for your devotion to preserving the strength and vitality of America's scientific and medical research endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

John Culberson
Member of Congress

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May 16, 2005

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman, Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations
H-309, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I would like to revise my previous request to you and the Subcommittee on behalf of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in light of the testimony of NASA Administrator Michael Griffin to the Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee last Thursday.

Instead of increasing funding for Project Prometheus by $300 million, I would ask only that the Subcommittee protect the President's recommended level of funding for this program. By Wednesday, at the latest, I will submit proposed report language for your consideration to be included as guidance and recommendations from our Subcommittee to NASA regarding the importance of developing the next generation of rocket propulsion technology through nuclear thermal or nuclear electric propulsion.

Second, I would request that our Subcommittee allocate $30 million for the development of a lander/orbiter for the ocean covered moon of Jupiter, Europa. As I mentioned in my previous letter, the Decadal Survey of all planetary scientists determined that a mission to Europa is the single highest priority of the worldwide scientific community. The first mission of Project Prometheus was supposed to be a mission to Europa; however, Administrator Griffin's testimony to the Senate indicated that he is going to rearrange the technological milestones of Project Prometheus, which would have the effect of indefinitely postponing this vital mission to Europa. A large long-range mission to the outer planets like this requires nearly a decade or more of careful planning and funding to succeed. It is absolutely essential that we act right now in this year's appropriations bill to start this planning process for the Europa mission. The President and NASA confirmed that a mission to Europa is their top priority among missions to the planets other than Mars when the President laid out his Vision for Space Exploration and then submitted his budget requests for NASA for FY2004 and FY2005. Therefore, my request that our Subcommittee allocate $30 million for the development of a Europa lander/orbiter is not only reasonable but consistent with the President's Vision for Space Exploration, his budget requests in previous years, and the final appropriations bills produced by this Subcommittee and the Congress for FY2004 and FY2005.

Third, I want to reiterate my request that the Subcommittee allocate an additional $55 million for SIM, the Space Interferometry Mission. I would also request that the Subcommittee protect the level of funding of $723 million recommended in the President's budget for the Mars Program.

I am asking that the Subcommittee include report language which I will submit to you no later than Wednesday. This report language will confirm the commitment of the Congress to the immensely successful robotic missions to Mars, and will ask the National Research Council to work in cooperation with NASA to develop a strategy for protecting the Earth from the impact of near Earth asteroids. This is necessary now because Asteroid 2004MN, a 320 meter asteroid, will come within 20,000 miles of Earth in 2029 and has a small but very real probability of an impact with the Earth in 2036 somewhere along the line from the Pacific Ocean Southwest of California across Central America and the Northern coast of South America. This asteroid would strike with the force of at least 870 Mt of TNT producing massive tidal waves and devastation on a hemispheric scale. Project Prometheus and the nuclear rocket propulsion it will develop is the only research project on Earth capable of developing a rocket engine with the ability to deflect this asteroid or similar asteroids in the future. Currently, no government agency, including NASA, has accepted responsibility of any kind for developing a contingency plan to intercept and deflect an asteroid on a collision course with the Earth. Because NASA's Administrator has apparently decided to postpone indefinitely the development of this vitally important new nuclear rocket propulsion technology, and because it will take at least a decade to develop this new nuclear electric or thermal engine, I believe it is essential for the Subcommittee to include report language this year dealing with this important subject.

Finally, after our appropriations bills are passed, I hope you will hold hearings focused on the future of America's manned and unmanned space program. In the absence of authorizing legislation, NASA continues to work on these immensely important and very expensive long-range space missions on a year-to-year basis, which is not in the nation's best interests. I hope that our Subcommittee will take a leading role in helping NASA establish a clear long-range plan consistent with the President's Vision and the policy guidance of the Congress. I also hope we will hold similar hearings focused on the future of America's investment in scientific research. We must do far more long-range planning, and invest far more money than the President has recommended for the National Science Foundation. I want to reiterate here my previous request that the Subcommittee allocate as much additional money as possible in this year's appropriations bill for the National Science Foundation.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. I look forward to working with you and our other Subcommittee members and our capable Subcommittee staff in the weeks, months, and years ahead. I want to especially thank you for your commitment to strengthen our nation's investment in scientific research and space exploration.

Sincerely yours,

John

John Culberson
Member of Congress

1. Support the President's budget request of $319.6 million for Project Prometheus.
2. $30 million for the development of a lander/orbiter for the ocean covered moon of Jupiter, Europa.
3. Increase funding for the Space Interferometry Mission by $55 million.
4. Support the President's budget request of $723 million for the Mars Program.
5. Increase funding for the National Science Foundation by $100 million.
6. $300,000 from the Department of Justice, Local Law Enforcement Account for the Texas Department of Public Safety's Border Security Network.
7. $5 million from the Department of Justice, Crime Lab Improvement Program for the Texas Department of Public Safety's Biometric Facial Identification/Comparison System.
8. $500,000 from the Department of Justice, Crime Lab Improvement Program or Crime Identifications Technology Grants for the Texas Department of Public Safety's DNA/Forensics Laboratory.
9. $300,000 from the Department of Justice, COPS Meth Enforcement and Clean-Up Account for the Texas Department of Public Safety's Clan Lab Clean-Ups.
10. Support the President's budget request of $57.92 million for the Scientific Ocean Drilling Vessel within the National Science Foundation's Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction account.
11. Reinstate funding for the Department of Justice's State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAPP), to the fullest extent possible.