

Citizens for Space Exploration – Washington, D.C. Trip May 14-16, 2007

Executive Summary Report

General Background: Citizens for Space Exploration (CSE) is comprised of a diverse group of small and large business representatives, students and teachers, and county/municipal officials and employees who support America's investment in space exploration.

2007 marked the 16th annual trip of CSE – formerly known as National Keep It Sold – to Washington, D.C. for meetings with Congress. CSE's bottom-line message was to advocate no less than full funding of NASA's FY08 budget request and support for America's space exploration program. CSE members also promoted a letter signed by more than 20 aerospace and technology company CEOs calling for more NASA funds and referenced efforts by Senators Mikulski (D-MD) and Hutchison (R-TX) to push for more funding for NASA.

More than 150 citizen taxpayers – including 36 university students/educators – from 26 states (listed on page 3) met with 317 congressional offices representing 45 states to advocate on behalf of NASA and space exploration. CSE visited with 90% of freshman member offices in the Senate and 68% of all House freshman member offices.

Members and/or staff were provided with a standard briefing paper that reviewed the benefits of space exploration and the importance of full funding for NASA, as well as NASA and Coalition for Space Exploration materials explaining the benefits of our nation's investment in space.

13 Congressional members (listed on page 3) – including Senators Hutchison (R-TX) and Cornyn (R-TX) and Representatives Cramer (D-AL), Weldon (R-FL), Feeney (R-FL) and Lampson (D-TX) – and staff participated in a congressional reception hosted by the CSE. NASA Associate Administrator Doc Horowitz also participated and spoke to those in attendance. NASA's lead for Congressional Relations, Brian Chase, spoke to the CSE members at an opening reception on Monday evening, May 14.

While in Washington, CSE members attended a partner appreciation breakfast sponsored by the Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program (SATOP) recognizing the efforts of NASA and its contractors to assist non-space small businesses with various technical challenges needed to make their products and/or services commercially successful.

Meeting Feedback: The information below provides a brief, top-level summary of major findings from CSE visits with House and Senate members/staff. The information is organized into six areas.

1. **Overall Support for NASA:** In general, support for NASA remains broad and bipartisan, but not particularly deep in terms of knowledge and understanding of program and benefit details. This is particularly true relative to freshman members and their staff. The CSE visit was a good opportunity to give these offices one of their first opportunities to hear the space story. In addition, support for NASA does not always translate into support for human exploration since some favor science, robotic missions and/or aeronautics over human aspects of the space program.
2. **Major Concerns about Space Exploration and/or NASA's Budget:** The most common concerns expressed dealt with the general issue of overall constraints in the federal budget and multiple programs – space and non-space – competing for a limited pool of resources. Democratic offices seemed more ready to blame the President for failing to request enough money for NASA to support his exploration program and to the budget demands related to the war in Iraq. The gap remains an important issue, but not overwhelming. Foreign competitors, like China, are also matters of concern, but a sizeable number of offices do not consider China's space program and plans are reason for alarm.
3. **Major Topics of Interest:** Education (particularly in math, science and engineering) was the overwhelming hottest topic of interest to members/staff, along with issues dealing with technological competitiveness. Other topics of interest were jobs, spinoff benefits (e.g. health care, environmental and agricultural), commercial space, national security applications, and energy independence. The CSC visits highlighted the fact that members are interested in the big picture issues involving space, but they really want to know about how the program benefits their congressional district and constituents.
4. **Presidential Candidates:** Staff for Senator John McCain (R-AZ) made it clear that going back to the Moon and on to Mars is not a high priority relative to energy independence and environmental issues. According to staff, he would fund NASA, but at lower levels.
5. **Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program (SATOP):** This program which involves providing technical support to small businesses for free again proved a big hit with congressional offices. Many requested additional information and expressed an interest in having small businesses in their districts participate. NASA should investigate the opportunity to expand this program around each of its Centers in order to serve a greater portion of the small business community throughout the U.S.

States Represented by Travelers

1. Alabama
2. Arizona
3. Arkansas
4. California
5. Florida
6. Georgia
7. Illinois
8. Kentucky
9. Louisiana
10. Maryland
11. Michigan
12. Minnesota
13. Mississippi
14. Missouri
15. New Mexico
16. New York
17. North Dakota
18. Ohio
19. Oklahoma
20. Oregon
21. Pennsylvania
22. Tennessee
23. Texas
24. Virginia
25. West Virginia
26. Wisconsin

Congressional Reception Attendees

1. Sen. John Cornyn TX
2. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison TX
3. Rep. John Carter TX 31
4. Rep. Louie Gohmert TX 1
5. Rep. Gene Green TX 29
6. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee TX 18
7. Rep. Nick Lampson TX 22
8. Rep. Michael McCaul TX 10
9. Rep. Ted Poe TX 2
10. Rep. Bud Cramer AL 5
11. Rep. Tom Feeney FL 24
12. Rep. Dave Weldon FL 15
13. Rep. Lynn Westmoreland GA 3