

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Subcommittee on Defense
Subcommittee on Transportation, HUD,
and Related Agencies
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development,
FDA and Related Agencies
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND POLICY



MARCY KAPTUR
9TH DISTRICT, OHIO
January 30, 2012

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The Honorable Charles F. Bolden
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20546-0002

Dear General Bolden:

I am writing in support of the proposed NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC) – European Space Agency (ESA) partnership.

It is critical the NASA GRC's Plum Brook facility is fully utilized. The ESA has approached NASA GRC with a proposal to test its new Ariane V upper stage engine at the B-2 Facility at NASA GRC's Plum Brook Station site. This is precisely the type of international cooperation and "thinking outside the box" that you have proposed prioritizing for NASA.

Review of the laws governing NASA's ability to perform this type of work, specifically regarding Reimbursable Space Act Agreements suggests that there is no provision that should preclude the establishment of this partnership. If NASA feels that a change in law is needed to carry this program out, please work with my staff to determine how we can accommodate NASA, just as we had to do in order to allow U.S. Astronauts to fly on Russia spacecraft after NASA failed to produce a replacement for the shuttle program. If NASA is not pursuing this joint venture, I would like to meet jointly with you and the Members of the Ohio delegation to discuss.

A healthy Plum Brook Station does not only benefit NASA. The United States Air Force has expressed interest in using the B-2 facility to test its NextGen engine immediately following the Ariane V test, and a number of other commercial spaceflight companies have expressed interest in using not only the B-2, but the Space Power Facility as well. NASA should do all it can to promote this world-class facility and its world-class workforce.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with NASA to realize this partnership.

Sincerely,


MARCY KAPTUR
Member of Congress