

June 20, 2008: Weekly Washington Update

Leadership in Space and Aviation development is an American trademark. NASA, the vanguard in space and aeronautics research, embodies our spirit of ingenuity and hard work.

I'm proud to represent the backbone of our country's aeronautics research, the NASA Langley Research Center. I was especially pleased this week to vote in favor of the NASA Authorization, which authorizes \$853.5 million for aeronautics research.

The NASA Authorization Act reaffirms our commitment to space exploration, doubles the authorization level for aeronautics research, encourages entrepreneurial efforts in the private sector and promotes math and science education. Most importantly, the NASA Authorization Bill affirms the importance of the work done at NASA Langley. This bill authorizes necessary funds for a variety of aeronautical research and development initiatives including national airspace enhancement, developing supersonic flight, aircraft noise and emissions reduction and weather research.

Of particular interest to many is the bill's national airspace enhancement initiative, which will require NASA to establish a research program to improve the reliability and timeliness of implementing new technologies for air traffic control and airport management. As we've seen firsthand at Newport News/Williamsburg International airport, demand for air travel is growing continually. This research will help reduce congestion and effectively manage growth in the years to come.

As many are probably aware, the original NASA budget request would have cut funding for aeronautics research by nearly 50%. Having toured NASA Langley and seen the critical work performed by the employees there, fixing this shortfall quickly became one of my chief priorities. Along with other concerned Members of Congress, I petitioned to increase aeronautics research and development funding. This week's authorization is a good sign that NASA Langley funding is on the right track.

After voting for this important legislation on Wednesday afternoon, I had the distinct pleasure of visiting NASA Day event at the Capitol. Here, I had the opportunity to meet with several Langley Research Center employees and get caught up on the latest in the exploration, aeronautics and science programs. The accomplishments of our NASA folks never fail to impress, and I will certainly continue to advocate for long term aeronautics research funding. NASA always has and will continue to lead the world in space exploration, aeronautics research and development, and science research programs.