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| The Honorable Richard ShelbyChairmanSenate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and ScienceS-128 CapitolWashington, DC 20510The Honorable Jeanne ShaheenRanking MemberSenate Appropriations Subcommittee onCommerce, Justice and ScienceS-146A CapitolWashington, DC 20510 |

Dear Senator Shelby and Senator Shaheen:

I am writing to request that you support the NASA National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program (Space Grant) in FY 2018 at a rate of $45 million. Space Grant is a competitive, state-federal partnership that functions through consortia in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. The program enables students to engage in outreach activities and research projects that prepare them for STEM careers. As this is a state-based program, I urge the Committee to ensure that the entire appropriated amount be allocated to consortia lead institutions in all 52 jurisdictions so that these activities can continue without interruption. Likewise, I urge the Committee to carry over language from the FY 2017 Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) House bill limiting NASA’s administrative fee to no more than 5% for each of the Education Directorate programs.

Space Grant consortia are effective catalysts in each state to help grow a high-tech workforce. With nearly 1,000 partner institutions, this program promotes aerospace and other NASA relevant STEM education activities, and helps sustain a pipeline of students for innovative, high-tech jobs. For every dollar that NASA provides, Space Grant consortia contribute on average an equal or greater amount from non-federal sources to maximize resources available to students in their states. Because this is a federal-state partnership, the Space Grant program not only addresses national needs, but has proven to be very effective at fulfilling state and regional STEM goals—NASA program data shows that, of all participating students graduating in a particular year, nearly 90% move on to either a STEM job in industry, NASA, academia, or they enroll in a STEM graduate program. Additional funding requested this year will be used primarily for meeting state and NASA-related STEM workforce needs.

As you work to advance the Fiscal Year 2018 CJS bill, please keep this important program in mind. It is vital that we continue to sustain the excellent work being done in the states by supporting the program at a funding level of $45 million.

Sincerely,