The Coalition for Aerospace and Science (CAS) is an alliance of prominent industry, academic, and scientific organizations united in support of robust and sustained federal investment in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). **We request Congress appropriate at least $27.18 billion for Fiscal Year 2026, a vital increase to maintain development of ongoing missions while initiating work on new groundbreaking endeavors.**

NASA's best days remain ahead of it, robotic missions planned or under development promise to open a new chapter of humanity's exploration of distant worlds, and the lead up and flight of Artemis II will further ignite the inspirational power of NASA not seen since the days of Apollo. Commercial activity in Low Earth Orbit is accelerating towards a future of space habitats that serve as research outposts and manufacturing nodes, and novel remote sensing platforms aim to leverage the unique vantage point of space to solve grand challenges here on Earth. The landing of the first commercial spacecraft on the Moon, last year, has sparked excitement about a new age of space exploration.

However, these recent and forthcoming achievements place NASA at a pivotal moment unprecedented since its establishment 65 years ago. China's human and robotic presence in space has grown tremendously over the past decade towards establishing itself as a peer competitor in space exploration and science. China completed assembly of its permanently crewed *Tiangong* space station in October 2022, while laying the groundwork to lead an international lunar base, with plans to beat current NASA-ESA efforts to return samples from Mars. China's achievements and ambitions will require Congress to ensure the US – through NASA – remains the undisputed leader in space science through robust growth in funding and inclusion in legislative efforts aimed at cementing America's global competitiveness.

Each member of CAS works with NASA on critical research, missions, and programs throughout the agency. Thereby, each member of the Coalition understands that healthy growth in funding and support for NASA overall has a positive impact on individual priorities. For FY 2026, CAS requests Congress provide funding below the topline to the following NASA directorates:

Science Mission Directorate: CAS requests at least $9 billion for NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD). Perhaps the most acute budgetary challenge for NASA is within the Science Mission Directorate, where competing science priorities coupled with cost increases has delayed or canceled projects and created uncertainty about many future missions. SMD needs at least $9 billion to support ongoing Decadal priority missions, such as Mars Sample Return (MSR) and the Geospace Dynamics Constellation (GDC), begin formulation for new decadal priorities, as well as provide robust funding for all the science divisions and to avert proposed cancellations. In an environment of growing private sector investment in space exploration, federally funded SMD work still plays a crucial role in supporting high-risk, high-reward research with no obvious business cases. This amount would allow for individual investigator grant programs, new competitive mission opportunities, and address needs that remain unmet in FY 2025.

Space Technology Mission Directorate: CAS requests $1.5 billion for the Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD). Since its inception, STMD has focused on improving NASA's technological capabilities across a wide array of areas that help the agency achieve mission requirements across all its directorates. These technologies have considerable applications for NASA's Artemis and Moon-to-Mars efforts in demonstrating capabilities that enable critical elements of those campaigns, such as surface

power, habitation, In-Situ Resource Utilization, communications, and more. STMD encourages partnerships between industry and academia that support early-career researchers and increase our nation's competitive STEM workforce.

Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate: CAS requests $7.62 billion for the Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate (ESDMD). NASA's human exploration agenda – and the global visibility and prestige it confers – is an unparalleled national asset that has spurred immeasurable economic, inspirational, and geopolitical benefits.

Space Operations Mission Directorate: CAS requests $4.39 billion for the Space Operations Mission Directorate (SOMD). The Coalition requests that SOMD maintain its support for the International Space Station, Commercial Crew and Cargo programs, and the Commercial LEO Development (CLD) program.

Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate: CAS requests $1 billion for the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD). This would provide the continued support for subsonic, supersonic, and hypersonic flight technologies and flight demonstrations. Research from this directorate develops technologies that transform the way we fly by lowering operating costs, increasing flight efficiency, and reducing aviation related environmental impacts. ARMD is critical to the United States' leadership in hypersonic technologies and systems while also advancing research on Unmanned Aircraft Systems for safe integration into the national airspace system.

STEM Engagement: CAS requests $150 million for the Office of STEM Engagement (OSTEM) and supports NASA's efforts to support the future STEM workforce. NASA must attract, fully engage, and retain the best talent available in the face of stiff competition from other science and technology sectors. Within this amount, the Coalition requests **$65 million for the National Space Grant College and Fellowship program.** OSTEM's Space Grant program serves to strengthen and promote a national network of state-based programs in partnership with NASA to develop and sustain a diverse, adaptable, and competitive STEM workforce, improve student accessibility to STEM-based learning opportunities, and advance the nation's STEM workforce pathways to further the progress of space and earth sciences and engineering that transforms our future and sustains American leadership.

Sincerely,

Aerospace Industries Association
Aerospace States Association
American Astronautical Society
American Astronomical Society
American Geophysical Union
American Institute of Physics
American Society of Agronomy
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Ball Aerospace
Boston University
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Cornell University
Crop Science Society of America
Florida State University
Geological Society of America
Georgia Institute of Technology
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
IEEE-USA
Lockheed Martin Corporation
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
New Mexico State University
Northrop Grumman Corporation
Northwestern University
Penn State University
Planet Labs
Princeton University
Purdue University

Raytheon Company
Rocket Lab
Rolls Royce
Soil Science Society of America
SPIE – the international society for optics and photonics
Texas A&M University
The Ohio State University
The Planetary Society
United Launch Alliance
University of Arizona
University of Colorado – Boulder
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California San Diego
University of Florida
University of Iowa
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University of Maryland – Baltimore County
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University of Washington
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Vanderbilt University
Washington State University
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution