



Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy

July 10, 2006

Senator Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Democratic Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski:

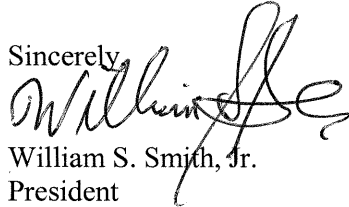
I am writing to express my strong support for the Mikulski-Hutchinson amendment to the Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill for F.Y. 2007. That provision would recognize that the combined effects of the recovery effort following the loss of the Columbia Space Shuttle, and the damages caused by the Hurricane Katrina have placed an unprecedented strain on the NASA budget over the past four years.

Without additional resources, NASA has funded these activities from within its existing budget and, as a result, has seriously imbalanced the space program. In particular, the devastating impacts on NASA's space science program have led to widespread concern on the part of the scientific community and the public.

Fiscal Year 2007 represents a critical point at which it is necessary to provide the needed resources to sustain the Shuttle program, complete the Space Station and re-pay the programs such as space science and aeronautics that have been under duress. Your amendment would accomplish this.

AURA is a consortium of 39 universities and non-profit organizations that represent the leading astronomical research institutions. AURA operates public observatories such as the Hubble Space Telescope that accomplish cutting-edge scientific advancements. We strongly support the text and intent of the amendment.

Sincerely,



William S. Smith, Jr.
President