

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: 5/21/2008 – KL

Division: Commissioner Dixie Spehar

Bulk Item: Yes X No

Department: BOCC – District 1

Staff Contact: Les Boatwright, Exec. Assist.

AGENDA ITEM WORDING:

Approval of a Resolution by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida requesting the Florida Congressional Delegation take action concerning the national strategic importance of maintaining spaceflight expertise at the Kennedy Space Center and ensuring that future crew and cargo logistic missions to the International Space Station use domestic capabilities.

ITEM BACKGROUND:

This Resolution will be forwarded to the State of Florida Congressional Delegation requesting the Delegation, as a whole, urge the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to immediately explore all possible domestic options – including COTS Program Capabilities A, B, C, and D – to reduce or eliminate the need to procure foreign logistic services to the International Space Station. Also, urging that these efforts not be limited to cargo logistics but should aggressively target crew logistic needs including, but not limited to, COTS Capability D. In addition, requesting that the Delegation encourage the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to fully utilize the demonstrated excellence of the Kennedy Space Center for the integration and launch of these crew and cargo logistic operations.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION:

None

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES:

N/A.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approval.

TOTAL COST: N/A

BUDGETED: Yes No

COST TO COUNTY: N/A

SOURCE OF FUNDS:

REVENUE PRODUCING: Yes No X **AMOUNT PER MONTH** **Year**

APPROVED BY: County Atty SA OMB/Purchasing Risk Management

DOCUMENTATION: Included: X Not Required

DISPOSITION:

AGENDA ITEM #

RESOLUTION ____ - 2008

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA REQUESTING THE FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TAKE ACTION CONCERNING THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING SPACEFLIGHT EXPERTISE AT THE KENNEDY SPACE CENTER AND ENSURING THAT FUTURE CREW AND CARGO LOGISTIC MISSIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION USE DOMESTIC CAPABILITIES; AND PROVIDING DIRECTION TO THE CLERK.

WHEREAS, the United States has a strategic interest in maintaining the nation's preeminence in spaceflight; the spaceflight expertise at the Kennedy Space Center is a center of excellence that should be maintained after the discontinuance of Space Shuttle missions; and the United States has obligations to provide crew and cargo logistic services to the International Space Station after the Shuttle is retired; and

WHEREAS, until the Constellation Program reaches operational status, the United States currently plans to substantially fulfill those obligations by purchasing logistic services with Russia, notably Soyuz and Progress flights; and these plans make the United States largely dependent on the Russians for a five year period or more in obtaining access to the International Space Station; and

WHEREAS, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has executed Space Act Agreements under the Commercial Orbital Transportation Services (COTS) Program to foster domestic commercial capability to provide crew and cargo logistics to the International Space Station; the COTS Program provides for four different cargo and crew logistic capabilities known as Capabilities A, B, C, and D; and the United States is the world's premier space faring nation because the American aerospace industry has consistently provided solutions to national needs including those of NASA; and

WHEREAS, these talents should be tasked to providing domestic solutions to America's crew and cargo logistic needs; and resources to be spent on procuring Russian Soyuz and Progress logistic services would best be devoted to the development and procurement of domestic crew and cargo logistic capabilities;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that:

1. The Clerk shall forward this Resolution to the State of Florida Congressional Delegation requesting the Delegation take the following actions:
 - a.) The Delegation, as a whole, urge the administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to immediately explore all possible domestic options – including COTS Program Capabilities A, B, C and D – to reduce or eliminate the need to procure foreign logistic services to the International Space Station.

- b.) That such efforts should not be limited to cargo logistics but should aggressively target crew logistic needs including, but not limited to COTS Capability D.
 - c.) In addition, that the Delegation encourage the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to fully utilize the demonstrated excellence of the Kennedy Space Center for the integration and launch of these crew and cargo logistic operations.
2. The Clerk is hereby directed to forward copies of this resolution to Senator Bill Nelson and Senator Mel Martinez, U. S. Senate; Representative Ron Saunders, District 120; Senator Larcenia Bullard, District 39; Senator Bill Nelson; Senator Mel Martinez; Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, District 18; and Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, District 25.

Passed and adopted by the Monroe County Board of Commissioners at a meeting held this 21st day of May, 2008.

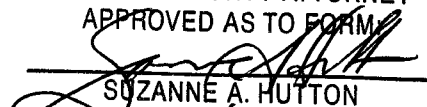
Mayor McCoy _____
Mayor Pro Tem Di Gennaro _____
Commissioner Murphy _____
Commissioner Neugent _____
Commissioner Spehar _____

MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

(Seal)
ATTEST: DANNY L. KOLHAGE, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

By: _____
Mayor Charles "Sonny" McCoy

MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
 APPROVED AS TO FORM

 SUZANNE A. HUTTON
 COUNTY ATTORNEY
 Date 5/30/08



TRUMAN G. SCARBOROUGH, JR., Commissioner, District 1
400 South Street, First Floor, Ste. 1A
Titusville, FL 32780-7698
E-mail: truman.scarborough@brevardcounty.us

Telephone (321) 264-6750
Fax (321) 264-6751

April 21, 2008

The Honorable Dixie M. Spehar
District 1 Commissioner
Monroe County
500 Whitehead Street, Ste 102
Key West, FL 33040



RE: Upcoming Retirement of Space Shuttle and Suspension of
U.S. Human Spaceflight Program

Dear Dixie:

The Brevard County Commission requested that I contact you for Monroe County County's assistance with the enclosed Resolution regarding our Nation's Space Program. The space program contributes an estimated annual \$4 Billion to Florida's economy. With the Kennedy Space Center, Floridians hold a special pride in our State's and Nation's dominant role in the exploration of the Universe. However, our concern reaches beyond national pride and Florida's economy. At stake is our national security and position as a global leader in research.

When the Space Shuttle is retired in 2010, the United States will not be able to launch astronauts into space for at least five years. During this 'Gap,' only China and Russia will launch humans into space. The Shuttle's replacement – the Constellation Program -- is projected to become operational in 2015. The General Accountability Office has already identified technical problems and budget overruns which will result in delays. 'Gaps' never get shorter.

During the 'Gap,' Americans will only be able to access the International Space Station by purchasing seats and cargo space aboard a Russian spacecraft. This occurs when the International Space Station, designated a 'National Laboratory' by the United States Congress reaches its full potential as a platform for scientific research to produce new pharmaceuticals, materials, and energy sources. Today's crew of three astronauts is only able to perform a "housekeeping" function aboard the Station. Serious scientific research will only begin with a six person crew. Adding to the problem, the Russian Soyuz would be able to rescue only three astronauts of the six astronauts.

The International Space Station was developed at a direct cost of \$100 billion to the American taxpayer. When the Shuttle stops flying, America will have to pay the Russians at least \$2 billion to access our National Laboratory in space. These costs could increase dramatically when Russia has a monopoly on flights to the Space Station.

Starting in 2011 NASA will be prohibited by law from contracting with the Russians because of nuclear nonproliferation issues concerning Iran and Syria. If these legal restrictions are not

Commissioner Spehar
Monroe County County
Page 2

waived, Americans cannot access the International Space Station regardless of how much we pay the Russians.

This scenario can become much worse. On February 27, 2008, Florida Senator Bill Nelson conducted a Senate hearing where the full extent of the problem was explored. I have enclosed a transcript of the proceeding together with a copy of a Washington Post front page story summarizing these complex geopolitical issues. Russia will have the ability to seek concessions from the United States on a range of issues from our relations with former Soviet Block countries to Russia's assertion of mineral rights in the Arctic.

Fortunately, there are options that will allow Americans access to the International Space Station without being held hostage to Russia. Launches of course would occur from Florida's Space Coast and provide employment opportunities for the 6,400 members of the Shuttle workforce who will lose their jobs in just over two years.

Please join us in a united Florida effort by passing a resolution similar to Brevard County's and forwarding your resolution to:

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart
Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Before the Shuttle is retired, we want to extend a special invitation to you and your family to have a VIP viewing of a Shuttle launch. Please watch the paper for dates of future launches and give me a call. I would be pleased to take care of your arrangements at the Kennedy Space Center.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider Brevard County's request. If you need additional information, please let me know.

Very truly yours,



Truman G. Scarborough
Chairman
Brevard County Commission

enc:

Brevard County Resolution 08-053
Washington Post news article
Transcript of Bill Nelson's Senate Hearing

NASA Wary of Relying on Russia

Moscow Soon to Be Lone Carrier of Astronauts to Space Station

By Marc Kaufman
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, March 7, 2008; A01

Tomorrow night, a European spacecraft is scheduled to blast off from French Guiana on its maiden voyage to the international space station, giving NASA and the world a new way to reach the orbiting laboratory.

For NASA, however, the launch of the Jules Verne Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV) also highlights a stark reality: **In 2 1/2 years, just as the station gets fully assembled, the United States will no longer have any spacecraft of its own capable of carrying astronauts and cargo to the station, in which roughly \$100 billion is being invested.** The three space shuttles will be retired by then, because of their high cost and questionable safety, and NASA will have nothing ready to replace them until 2015 at the earliest.

For five years or more, the United States will be dependent on the technology of others to reach the station, which American taxpayers largely paid for. To complicate things further, the only nation now capable of flying humans to the station is Russia, giving it a strong bargaining position to decide what it wants to charge for the flights at a time when U.S.-Russian relations are becoming increasingly testy.

In addition, some fear the price will be paid not only in billions of dollars but also in lost American prestige and lost leverage on the Russians when it comes to issues such as aiding Iran with its nuclear program.

NASA Administrator Michael Griffin calls the situation his "greatest regret and greatest concern." For most of the five-year gap, he said, "we will be largely dependent on the Russians, and that is terrible place for the United States to be. I'm worried, and many others are worried."

Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), chairman of the subcommittee that oversees NASA, went further. "This is a very serious betrayal of American interests," he said. "This will be the first time since Sputnik when the United States will not have a significant space superiority. I remain dumbfounded that we've allowed this serious threat to our national security to develop."

The White House, Congress and the space community have known for years that the gap was looming, but there were always other priorities.

Those most involved with the issue say that its seriousness will become more glaring this summer, when negotiations with Russia begin and Congress is likely to debate whether to grant a waiver to the law that prohibits certain kinds of commerce with nations that support the Iranian or North Korean nuclear program.

Griffin has testified that while the waiver is essential, it is "**unseemly, simply unseemly, for the United States -- the world's leading power and leading space power -- to be reduced to purchasing services like this.** It affects, in my view, how we are seen in the world, and not for the better."

NASA's budget calls for spending \$2.6 billion for transportation to the space station between fiscal 2009 and 2013. As it stands now, much of that would go to the Russians.

With that prospect ahead, Griffin told Nelson's committee last week that he is working with the fledgling private rocket company SpaceX to speed its efforts to build a private spacecraft that can take over some of the work of ferrying astronauts into space. Both Nelson and Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) had recommended that NASA formally push ahead with that effort.

But SpaceX, while eager to do the work, has not successfully orbited even a cargo spacecraft, let alone one designed to the much higher standards needed for human flight. Nonetheless, SpaceX founder Elon Musk said in a telephone interview that his company might have a manned spacecraft capability by the end of 2011 if NASA exercises its option under a 2006 agreement to provide cargo service. With that go-ahead, SpaceX would put its manned rocket program into high gear, he said.

"Is there a risk that we won't succeed? Yes, there is," said Musk, co-founder of the PayPal online payment system. "But if the United States doesn't provide any competition to the Russians, then they have a monopoly on crew transport to the station and they can dictate their terms. Do taxpayers really want all that money to go to Russia, rather than to an American company with American workers?"

In his testimony, Griffin said he is inclined to exercise the human spaceflight option, but he also said he very much doubts that SpaceX will have a spacecraft ready for astronauts by 2012.

The gap in American capability to reach the space station is the result of factors including the 2003 breakup of the space shuttle Columbia, the subsequent decision to retire the three remaining shuttles by September 2010 and the lack of additional funds to quickly build a replacement.

NASA has let contracts to design and test a new-generation rocket and crew capsule, but it has had to go slowly because of the high cost of operating the shuttles, which are the only spacecraft able to carry large components to the still-incomplete space station. Griffin has testified that the replacement spacecraft could be ready in 2013 rather than 2015 if the agency had an additional \$2 billion, but the administration has not asked for the funding.

Last year, the White House opposed a bill passed by the Senate to give NASA an additional \$1 billion to make up for some of the costs incurred after Columbia broke apart -- a step similar to one taken after the Challenger disaster in 1986.

"What we have here is an agency that has been given a lot to do but has been starved for funds," Nelson said. "I think the gap is largely due to the administration's refusal to give NASA the funds it needs. And now we'll be forced to give billions to the Russians because we didn't spend millions before. It's the worst of all worlds."

Griffin, a strong advocate for manned spaceflight and a loyal member of the administration, said that past Congresses and administrations let the manned space program atrophy and that it took President Bush's 2004 "vision" for human travel to the moon and Mars to rejuvenate the program.

Still, many see Bush as having limited interest in space. Not only have NASA budgets remained tight, but Bush never visited the Johnson Space Center in Houston during his six years as governor of Texas, and as president he visited once, for a memorial service for the lost Columbia astronauts.

The European spacecraft scheduled for launch tomorrow night is the first of six cargo-carrying flights by Ariespace, a public-private company, in exchange for NASA ferrying a large European lab to the station on the shuttle. Chairman and chief executive Jean-Yves Le Gall said in an interview last week that the company would like to play a larger role in supplying the space station, but it is waiting for its first successful launch before pressing its case.

The European Union is scheduled to decide in November whether to enter the field of human spaceflight, potentially joining the club that so far includes only the United States, Russia and China.

Le Gall acknowledged that the ATV -- which is the size of a London double-decker bus -- is now more expensive to build and operate than its Russian competitors, but he said that may change if Russia becomes the sole carrier. Nonetheless, the Europeans face a number of obstacles in selling their space transport services to NASA, including buy-American provisions that favor homegrown companies such as SpaceX.

"We believe we can be an important part of the solution for the space station and counterbalance to the Russians, if we are given a chance," Le Gall said.

Despite the broad concern over NASA's future dependence on Russia, Griffin said the agency's experience with its most important space station partner has been good. The Russians helped astronauts stranded on the space station after the Columbia breakup, and they have continued to provide crew and cargo transport services -- currently as part of a \$780 million, multiyear contract.

Griffin also said a new deal with the Russians has to be signed by early next year. The Russians, he said, need a three-year lead time to build a sufficient quantity of their expendable, but very dependable, Soyuz and Progress spacecraft.

It's Tax Time! [Get tips, forms and advice on AOL Money & Finance.](#)