



August 31, 2011

Shari A. Silbert
Manager, Site-Wide PEIS
NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
Wallops Flight Facility, Code 250.W
Wallops Island, Virginia 23337

Re: WFF Site-Wide PEIS

Dear Ms. Silbert:

As the President and CEO of the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast, I would like to take advantage of the opportunity afforded to me to provide input during the 'public comment' period of the Site-Wide Programmatic Environment Impact Statement (PEIS) for Wallops Flight Facility (WFF). It is our belief that some of the potential alternatives detailed in the publicly available documents of the PEIS, to date, constitute a direct threat to the economic well being of the people of the Space Coast, in particular, and to the fiscal health of the U.S. population, in general.

The President's 2010 National Space Policy document specifically states: "All actions undertaken by departments and agencies in implementing this directive shall be within the overall resource and policy guidance provided by the President." Clearly, the present and future budgetary constraints demand the federal government resist spending scarce tax dollars on the creation of duplicative space launch infrastructure in support of orbital human spaceflight.

The NEPA process establishes goals for various agency actions. It sets national policy for the federal government to assure "safe, healthful, productive" activities, and to "attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable or unintended consequences," as per NEPA § 101 (b); 42 U.S.C. §4331 (b).

It is those 'undesirable or unintended consequences' that we wish to draw to your attention. The results of this effort to expand the capability for manned launches to the International Space Station (ISS) from Virginia are 'undesirable' to the people of Florida, both as taxpayers paying for redundant NASA infrastructure and as a workforce struggling to maintain thousands of jobs in launch activity where this work has been done for almost two generations.

The most pressing issue for the Florida workforce is the sense of betrayal that their tax dollars might be used in establishing a competing orbital human spaceflight launch capability in another state when they have so well and ably done the job here in Florida. It is recognized that commercial human spaceflight launch capabilities will arise throughout the country and elsewhere over time, but it makes no sense for NASA to be making such an investment.

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Shari A. Silbert
August 31, 2011
Page 2

Access for NASA astronauts into space has never been at risk due to the Florida location, so why expend scarce tax dollars to mitigate a risk that does not exist? This contradiction is all the more pronounced given that the existing infrastructure in Florida can more than adequately support all NASA orbital human spaceflight for the foreseeable future.

The purpose of the EIS is to solicit and evaluate public comments to potential developments; the people of Florida have every expectation their concerns will be addressed in an appropriate manner by a federal agency into which they contribute. Although it is uncertain what specific methodology for evaluating the socioeconomic impact would best fit within the proper PEIS protocol for this project, the impact to this community is clearly significant and adverse. It will not likely be a discrete event, but more an ongoing process with the cumulative effects of numerous potential projects proving to be the most damaging to our citizens. The alternatives identified in the documentation so far have only hinted at what could come, but it is clear enough to represent a genuine threat to the interests of this community.

The EDC, and the community we represent, do not oppose the enhancement of capabilities at WFF for further collaboration with other federal agencies where appropriate, but we do object to any effort to enable the establishment of infrastructure which would support orbital human spaceflight. It is that capability that is so demonstrably duplicative to existing facilities and expertise in Florida, a capability in which the nation's taxpayers have already made significant investment. It is our contention that these broader interests must be a component of any decision making process regarding the use of tax dollars at WFF.

Therefore, should this development be approved, we respectfully request specific language be incorporated within the PEIS that would prohibit the expenditure of federal resources to enable that capability.

We look forward to working with you as this process further develops.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynda Weatherman', written over a circular scribble.

Lynda Weatherman
President & CEO