



General Contractor providing design, engineering & assembly of space complexes.

December 19, 2008

I appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Obama NASA Transition Team. We have been impressed by the Team's activities, and strongly commend the manner in which you have reached out to a wide variety of companies, associations, and experts, to solicit input and ideas. Such an open approach is unprecedented, and we hope that NASA continues this policy of inclusiveness in the future.

Per our discussion, we believe that a paradigm shift is necessary at the Agency. NASA's focus on developing prohibitively expensive systems and equipment that can only be used by the government is no longer viable. Instead, NASA should be limited to the role of customer, and leverage private sector efficiency and innovation in order to both save taxpayer money and put an end to a deplorable tradition of out of control spending and unsustainable programs.

Nowhere is adopting this strategy, of simply acting as a smart customer, more important than in the crewed transportation arena. Currently, NASA is sending billions of taxpayer dollars to Russia in order to provide crew transportation services to and from the International Space Station. Not only does this mean transferring vast sums of wealth out of the country, but the service costs, estimated to be roughly \$47 million per seat on a Soyuz, are outrageous and will stifle the potential for any future private sector development of Low Earth Orbit ("LEO"). Similarly, spending tens of billions of dollars on an even more expensive, complex, and potentially problematic government launch system also represents an imprudent strategy.

Instead, NASA should exclusively purchase crew transportation services from domestic companies willing to leverage existing or future rocket and capsule systems. The COTS and Commercial Resupply Services programs should represent the future of the Agency, and are excellent models that must be fully utilized (e.g., triggering Capability D) and rapidly expanded in order to provide both the government and the private sector with multiple, affordable, and safe LEO crew transportation options.

Limited, NASA-only growth and bureaucratic empires must be shunned in favor of spawning entire new private sector space industries, which will ultimately create far more jobs than the relative handful produced by taxpayer funded government programs. One need look no further than the transition of satellite systems from exclusive government control to the private sector in order to see the vast economic potential of such a change.

In addition to the paramount importance of limiting its role to that of a smart transportation customer, there are numerous other actions that NASA should take to encourage private sector development and job creation, such as: export control reform, creating a new division of NASA exclusively dedicated to fostering domestic entrepreneurial development, and using NASA intellectual property as an incentive to invest instead of a barrier to entry.



Again, I appreciated the opportunity to address the Transition Team, and look forward to working with NASA under the Obama Administration to unleash the power of entrepreneurialism in this New Frontier.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Gold".

Mike Gold
Director, Bigelow Aerospace Washington, D.C. Area Office