Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2010

Major General Charles F. Bolden, USMC (Ret.)
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20546-0002

Dear General Bolden:

We are writing to express our continued support for the Secretary of the Air Force's request for an interagency transfer of a retired space-worthy orbiter for preservation and display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) in Ohio. We wish to reiterate our support by emphasizing the mutual advantages for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Air Force, and the American people.

The conveyance of a retired orbiter to the Air Force is in keeping with federal property procedures and, as with the similar conveyance to the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, it retains this most valued and historic aerospace vehicle firmly in the stewardship of the federal government. The Air Force has a long record of proven achievements and excellence in historic preservation and is highly capable of accepting this challenge and responsibility. The Air Force and the NMUSAF staff have considerable resources and skilled manpower to aid in its transportation, preparation for exhibit, appropriate display, as well as the continued safeguarding and care in the years to come.

We believe that public visibility and accessibility are also key benefits to placing an orbiter with the Air Force's national museum. The NMUSAF, located on historic Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, is at the cross roads of Middle America. Within a day's drive of 60 percent of the U.S. population, the museum is easily accessible to millions from across the American heartland, hosting more than 1.3 million visitors annually. It is our understanding that the institution is well equipped to accommodate the increased attendance that would be expected to result from the display of an orbiter. Moreover, the NMUSAF, which is the world's oldest and largest aviation museum, is in the final planning stages of a new 200,000 square foot addition to accommodate its own continued growth and popularity. This state of the art facility will offer a premier venue to showcase the shuttle and highlight the NASA–Air Force partnership that is embodied in the shuttle program.

Strengthening important aerospace heritage relationships is another key benefit of placement of an orbiter at the NMUSAF and the historic home of the Wright brothers. Ohio, the birthplace of aviation, is proud of its century long tradition of aviation pioneering and

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development. This continues today through the partnering with NASA in aeronautic and astronautic development at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, NASA's Glenn Research Center, and related research, and educational institutions across Ohio.

Though the NMUSAF serves a growing national audience, since Ohio is the host state, we wish to assure you that our State and local communities are in support of the Air Force's request and will work to contribute to its success. Ohio's Congressional delegation is confident that the Air Force, with the enthusiastic support of Ohioans across our State, will successfully address the complexities and challenges of orbiter placement.

With these facts and our support in mind, we hope that you will carefully consider the many advantages of placing an orbiter under Air Force stewardship at the NMUSAF. We all look forward to Ohio becoming a home for this national treasure and being able to aid in sharing an important chapter in space history for all Americans.

Sincerely,

George V. Voinovich
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress

John A. Boehner
Member of Congress

Steve Austria
Member of Congress

Jim Jordan
Member of Congress

Steve Driehaus
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Steven C. LaTourette
Member of Congress

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