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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 68

Offered January 11, 2006

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Commending NASA's initiatives and Vision for Space Exploration.

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WHEREAS, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is commended for its long and proven history in performing the courageous and sometimes costly work of charting frontiers, and it is clear that charging the agency to carry on with this important work is in the long-term best interests of the nation; and

WHEREAS, the United States has a proud heritage of leading the world in exploration and discovery on land, under the seas, and in outer space; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia has played a leading role in expanding America's exploration initiatives throughout history, as evidenced by adventures ranging from the settlement of Jamestown, to establishing the first aeronautics research laboratory, to training the Apollo astronauts, and to the exploration of the surface of Mars; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of America's frontier from the original 13 states to the outer reaches of the solar system has resulted in immeasurable benefits to all humankind through development of new technologies and commercial spin-offs, creation of new jobs across the entire economic spectrum, economic growth through creation of new commercial products and markets, creation of advanced educational opportunities, and establishment of a legacy for future generations; and

WHEREAS, space exploration, particularly, as carried out under the auspices of NASA, has generated discoveries and indirect economic and social benefits; has been proven to ignite students' interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and has led to the creation of the Explorer Schools, the Challenger Centers, the Distance Learning Programs, and the NASA Educator Resource Centers; and

WHEREAS, NASA Centers—Langley Research Center and Wallops Flight Facility—both recognized for their outstanding research facilities and contributions to the nation's aerospace program, jointly contribute to local and state economic development, including the direct employment of more than 4,300 people within Virginia; and

WHEREAS, NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton is a world-renowned center for the research and development of many cutting-edge aerospace technologies and is a model for creating a consortium of university, government, and private sector entities to foster collaborative research and development, such as the National Institute of Aerospace, the National Consortium for Aviation Mobility, the Technology Commercialization Center, and the Virginia Space Grant Consortium; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's colleges and universities and many of Virginia's large and small business interests have all benefited from nearly \$3 billion of NASA funding that has come into the state in the past five years; and

WHEREAS, the talent, technology, and infrastructure at NASA Langley Research Center played a critical role in returning the shuttle to flight and will be essential to developing the technologies necessary to carry out NASA's future missions; and

WHEREAS, congressional support and funding for the Vision for Space Exploration program as submitted to Congress in the Fiscal Year 2007 budget will enable the United States to pioneer the next frontier in space with a return of humans to the moon and subsequent voyages to Mars; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly commend NASA's initiatives and Vision for Space Exploration, which will preserve the United States as a leader in aeronautics; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to NASA in recognition of its contributions to Vision for Space Exploration as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude and hope for its continued success in the exploration and development of space, aeronautics, and earth sciences.

INTRODUCED

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