

2015 SESSION

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 286

Commending the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 26, 2015

WHEREAS, the commercial space launch industry is in a dynamic state, with the development of innovative, fully reusable booster rockets leading to changes in the global market share for commercial, civil, and military space launches; and

WHEREAS, it is essential for the Commonwealth to keep its commercial space launch facility competitive in a changing market, which is expected to continue growing through the end of the decade; and

WHEREAS, Space Exploration Technologies Corporation and Blue Origin are currently perfecting reusable space launch booster rockets, which could reduce the cost to achieve low-earth orbit to as little as 1/100 of the current cost by the end of the decade; and

WHEREAS, the United States Air Force is now conducting an environmental impact study related to landing first-stage Falcon 9 boosters at Cape Canaveral, Florida, in the near future, a study that the Federal Aviation Administration will review prior to issuing any launch or landing permits in Florida or the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, for NASA's Wallops Flight Facility to remain competitive as a national, licensed, orbital spaceport, it is important for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to undertake an environmental impact study related to landing space launch booster rockets at the facility and to update its assessment related to human space flight from the facility; and

WHEREAS, NASA's Wallops Flight Facility and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport represent an investment in federal and state infrastructure exceeding \$1 billion, to be leveraged to generate the maximum return in a changing commercial space launch market; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive environmental impact statement related to landing fully reusable space launch booster rockets at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility will aid in the determination of the role the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority will play in shaping the commercial space launch market and the desirability of future NASA Space Act Agreements; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the National Aeronautics and Space Administration hereby be commended for exploring all options to ensure the safety and continuing viability of NASA's Wallops Flight Facility and maximize the facility's potential through the use of fully reusable commercial booster rockets and spacecraft; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the director of NASA's Wallops Flight Facility, and the executive director of the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority.

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