



June 13, 2023

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Garret Graves
Chairman
Subcommittee on Aviation
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Cohen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Aviation
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Cohen,

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport (MARS), I write to share my strong support for the *Securing Growth and Robust Leadership in American Aviation Act*. This legislation would reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration for the next five years with a number of updates to ensure the United States remains the global leader in aerospace and aerospace infrastructure.

Specifically, I highly commend the Committee for its leadership in recognizing the need for federal support for the nation's space launch infrastructure and for taking transformative action to include space launch infrastructure in the Department of Transportation's investment portfolio. Section 683 of the bill creates a pilot program for intermodal infrastructure improvements designed to provide meaningful awards to entities like MARS to sustain and modernize key infrastructure required for space transportation activities.

As one of only four vertical spaceports in the United States capable of vertical orbital launch, MARS leverages the enduring commitment of the Commonwealth of Virginia to contribute to our national security and support the civil space program and commercial space endeavors, all while driving positive aerospace economic activity across the mid-Atlantic region. The Committee has rightfully taken notice that the commercial aerospace industry is burgeoning, and demand is stressing the available launch facilities and infrastructure across the country. Section 683 is an important legislative provision that



would build on the rich heritage of U.S. federal investments in the various modes of transportation. It demonstrates our country's commitment to remaining the global leader in aerospace, which is becoming increasingly important, and to staying on the cutting edge of economic growth while supporting the innovation occurring daily in the aerospace industry.

I applaud you, the Committee, its members, and the professional staff for the vision and leadership to produce and shepherd this legislation to ensure the United States remains the world leader in aerospace.

Sincerely,

Maj. Gen. Roosevelt "Ted" Mercer, Jr., USAF (Ret.)
CEO and Executive Director
Virginia Spaceport Authority