

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



February 14, 2011

Vice Admiral Joseph W. Dyer, USN (Ret.)
Chairman
Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, DC 20546

~~JOE~~
Dear Admiral Dyer:

Enclosed is NASA's response to Recommendation 2010-04-04 from the 2010 Fourth Quarterly Meeting of the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel (ASAP). Please do not hesitate to contact me if the ASAP would like further background on the information provided in the enclosure.

I look forward to receiving continued advice from the ASAP that results from your important fact-finding and quarterly meetings.

Sincerely, ~~Joe~~ ~~Swager~~

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Bolden, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Charles F. Bolden, Jr.
Administrator

Enclosure

ASAP Tracking Number 2010-04-04
Timely Decision on STS-135

ASAP Finding

The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act requires a 60-day notification for employees who will be terminated or separated. STS-134, the last planned Shuttle launch, is currently scheduled for a February 27, 2011 launch. This would mean issuance of a WARN notification in January 2011, followed by rescission of the notice if STS-135 is later approved. This will increase the anxiety of the workforce right before the launch of STS-134 as well as have potential negative impact on future plans to fly an STS-135 mission.

ASAP Recommendation

The decision on STS-135 should be made as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the calendar year."

NASA Response

On December 23, 2010, NASA issued clear direction to the Space Shuttle and International Space Station Programs to make all necessary preparations, including maintaining the requisite workforce and extending contracts if necessary, to fly STS-135 in the June 2011 time period. Attached is a memo from the Associate Administrator for Space Operations dated December 23, 2010, subject, Maintaining Capability to Conduct the STS-135 Mission.

After discussions with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, agreement has been reached that enables NASA to continue to work on the STS-135 mission. If an alternative decision is made to not execute this mission, the Agency will have sufficient resources to fund any potential inefficiency that may result.

Enclosure

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



December 23, 2010

Reply to Attn of:

Space Operations Mission Directorate

TO: Manager, International Space Station Program
 Manager, Space Shuttle Program

FROM: Associate Administrator for Space Operations

SUBJECT: Maintaining Capability to Conduct the STS-135 Mission

The NASA Authorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-267) directs NASA to conduct the above-referenced mission. As of this date, the Congress has not cleared final FY 2011 appropriations for the Federal government, including NASA. However, the FY 2011 Continuing Appropriations Act provides funding for most Federal departments and agencies, including NASA, through March 4, 2010, at FY 2010 enacted levels. Funding made available in this measure will enable NASA to work towards the STS-135 mission.

For this reason, I ask that you continue planning and preparations efforts to execute this mission in late June 2011 as currently planned. This includes maintaining the requisite workforce to safely conduct this mission and extending contracts if necessary. We must focus on STS-135 as a real mission as well as a Launch-On-Need capability for the STS-134. Without clarity in focus now we reduce the probability of safely executing this critical mission. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide clear direction for the teams. STS-135 is critical to health of the International Space Station.

If there are any questions concerning this direction, please contact me immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William H. Gerstenmaier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

William H. Gerstenmaier

Attachment