

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2012

The Honorable Howard “Buck” McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith:

As members of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), we write to express our serious concerns regarding budgetary cuts to small satellite programs such as Operationally Responsive Space (ORS) and the Space Test Program (STP) in fiscal year 2013 (FY13).

The FY13 budget for the Department of Defense (DoD) seeks to repeal the establishment of the ORS program office and eliminate already marginal investments in small satellite programs. Given the increasingly competitive environment in space and the high cost of procuring traditional, multi-billion dollar satellites, we fear these cuts are penny-wise and pound-foolish.

As you know, HASC has rightly recognized the value of ORS and has consistently provided resources to ensure its successful operation. Last year’s FY12 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) House Report 112-078 noted the following:

“The committee notes that funding for the ORS program has decreased over the past few fiscal years... The committee believes a steady level of effort and funds are necessary to advance ORS capabilities so they become sufficiently mature to provide rapid support to the warfighter.”

HASC not only noted its continued support for ORS in House Report 112-078, but authorized an additional \$20 million for the program.

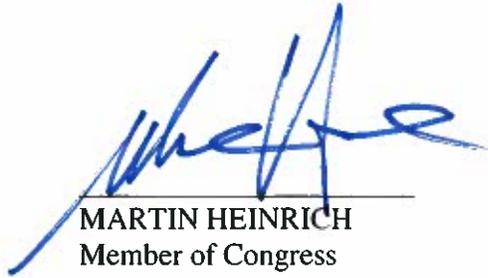
Despite DoD’s request to cut these programs, it has failed to justify the decisions. In a March 7, 2012 Strategic Forces Subcommittee hearing, General William Shelton, commander of Air Force Space Command, acknowledged that the coordination among entities relying on STP “did not occur,” and that the decision makers “didn’t have the time” to consider the implications of cutting the program. Furthermore, Air Force officials informed the committee that CENTCOM has been “extremely impressed with the imagery they had gotten from ORS-1,” and that the program provided “a war fighting advantage, no question.”

At a time when more than 60 nations are operating satellites worldwide and China is demonstrating anti-satellite technologies, the vision to develop, acquire, field and employ space technologies faster and at a lower cost is both strategically and fiscally responsible. We must cut federal spending but spending cuts should not come at the expense of proven technologies that are also intended to lower costs.

We urge you to continue your long-standing support for ORS and STP— including rejecting the repeal of ORS—to help reign in rising costs and ensure our service members continue to have the unique advantages they possess on the battlefield.

Thank you for your leadership and we look forward to working with you on the FY13 NDAA.

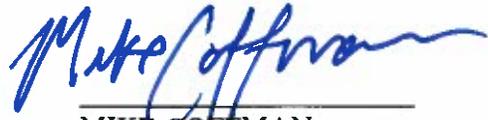
Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH
Member of Congress



DOUG LAMBORN
Member of Congress



MIKE COFFMAN
Member of Congress



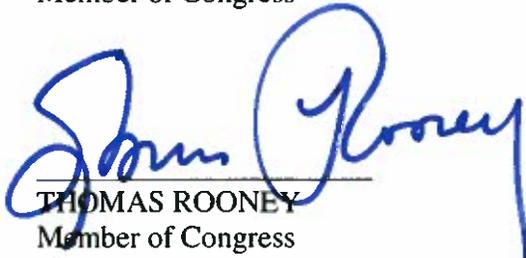
RICK LARSEN
Member of Congress



ROBERT ANDREWS
Member of Congress



HENRY "HANK" JOHNSON
Member of Congress



THOMAS ROONEY
Member of Congress

Cc: Rep. Michael Turner
Chairman, Strategic Forces Subcommittee
Rep. Loretta Sanchez
Ranking Member, Strategic Forces Subcommittee