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The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski and Senator Hutchison:

I am writing to convey strong support for completing the development and construction of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). As an advanced successor to the Hubble Space Telescope (HST), JWST will push through the boundaries of our current knowledge of the Universe and, like HST, capture the interest and fascination of people in every country of the world. JWST will be a source of pride to NASA, the United States, and all Americans. Not having a forthcoming replacement to follow the eventual closing of HST would be a heartfelt disappointment to scientists in every discipline and Americans of all convictions. No one truly wants to see this great project end. We all want to see JWST take flight.

JWST is among the important missions and programs undertaken by NASA: Exploration of our solar system by robotic spacecraft, studies of the Earth from orbiting platforms, cutting-edge aeronautics research, small missions ranging from Explorer-class to suborbital flights that can engage and train students at our universities, and the bravery of the men and women of our astronaut corps who define the American can-do spirit. Our space program touches every American. We cannot allow such activities to be placed in competition with one another. They are bound together as our civilian space program, but they are different undertakings, with different purposes, involving different people and communities. We must find a way forward that keeps our commitment to JWST and keeps us advancing on every aspect of our space program.

On behalf of our 105 member universities, I thank you for your leadership. I urge you and your colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, and in both houses of Congress, to join together to find funding for JWST and for a robust, comprehensive, and healthy U.S. space program.

Sincerely,

Frederick A. Tarantino
President & CEO