

shall be responsible for the development of short- and long term strategic plans for maintaining, renewing and extending suborbital facilities and capabilities.

(c) Establishment

The Administrator shall establish a Commercial Reusable Suborbital Research Program within the Space Technology Program that shall fund the development of payloads for scientific research, technology development, and education, and shall provide flight opportunities for those payloads to microgravity environments and suborbital altitudes. The Commercial Reusable Suborbital Research Program may fund engineering and integration demonstrations, proofs of concept, or educational experiments for commercial reusable vehicle flights. The program shall endeavor to work with NASA's Mission Directorates to help achieve NASA's research, technology, and education goals.

(d) Report

The Administrator shall submit a report annually to the appropriate committees of Congress describing progress in carrying out the Commercial Reusable Suborbital Research program, including the number and type of suborbital missions planned in each fiscal year.

(e) Authorization

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2013 to carry out this section.

(Pub. L. 111-267, title IX, §907, Oct. 11, 2010, 124 Stat. 2837.)

SUBCHAPTER IX—EDUCATION

§ 18421. Study of potential commercial orbital platform program impact on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

A fundamental and unique capability of NASA is in stimulating science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education in the United States. In ensuring maximum use of that capability, the Administrator shall carry out a study to—

- (1) identify the benefits of and lessons learned from ongoing and previous NASA orbital student programs including, at a minimum, the Get Away Special (GAS) and Earth Knowledge Acquired by Middle School Students (EarthKAM) programs, on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education;
- (2) assess the potential impacts on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education of a program that would facilitate the development of scientific and educational payloads involving United States students and educators and the flights of those payloads on commercially available orbital platforms, when available and operational, with the goal of providing frequent and regular payload launches;
- (3) identify NASA expertise, such as NASA science, engineering, payload development, and payload operations, that could be made available to facilitate a science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics program using commercial orbital platforms; and

- (4) identify the issues that would need to be addressed before NASA could properly assess the merits and feasibility of the program described in paragraph (2).

(Pub. L. 111-267, title X, §1003, Oct. 11, 2010, 124 Stat. 2838; Pub. L. 111-358, title II, §205(a), Jan. 4, 2011, 124 Stat. 3995.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2011—Pub. L. 111-358 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “A fundamental and unique capability of NASA is in stimulating science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education in the United States. In ensuring maximum use of that capability, NASA shall—

“(1) establish a program to annually sponsor scientific and educational payloads developed with United States student and educator involvement to be flown on commercially available orbital platforms, when available and operational, with the goal of launching at least 50 such payloads (with at least one from each of the 50 States) to orbit on at least one mission per year;

“(2) contract with providers of commercial orbital platform services for their use by the STEM-Commercial Orbital Platform program, preceded by the issuance of a request for proposal, not later than 90 days after October 11, 2010, to enter into at least one funded, competitively-awarded contract for commercial orbital platform services and make awards within 180 days after such date; and

“(3) engage with United States students and educators and make available NASA's science, engineering, payload development, and payload operations expertise to student teams selected to participate in the STEM-Commercial Orbital Platform program.”

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2011 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 111-358, title II, §205(c), Jan. 4, 2011, 124 Stat. 3996, provided that: “The amendment made by subsection (a) [amending this section] shall take effect on October 12, 2010.”

SUBCHAPTER X—RE-SCOPING AND REVITALIZING INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES

§ 18431. Workforce stabilization and critical skills preservation

Prior to receipt by the Congress of the study, recommendations, and implementation strategy developed pursuant to section 1103,¹ none of the funds authorized for use under this Act may be used to transfer the functions, missions, or activities, and associated civil service and contractor positions, from any NASA facility without authorization by the Congress to implement the proposed strategy. The Administrator shall preserve the critical skills and competencies in place at NASA centers prior to October 11, 2010, in order to facilitate timely implementation of the requirements of this chapter and to minimize disruption to the workforce. The Administrator may not implement any reduction-in-force or other involuntary separations of permanent, non-Senior-Executive-Service, civil servant employees before September 30, 2013, except

¹ See References in Text note below.