

MEMBERS LAUNCH PLAN TO PRESERVE AMERICA'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN AERONAUTICS AND AVIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 2, 2002

MEMBERS LAUNCH PLAN TO PRESERVE AMERICA'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN AERONAUTICS AND AVIATION
Aeronautics R&D Revitalization Act Introduced in the House

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) and several colleagues have launched an initiative to energize America's aeronautics and aviation industry to counteract a dramatic decline in U.S. research and development spending as well as to meet the challenge of European Union efforts to win global leadership in the industry.

Larson stated: "Seventy-five years ago this month, Charles Lindbergh made his historic flight across the Atlantic Ocean, setting the stage for decades of American dominance in the aerospace and aviation fields, with U.S. aviation technology reaching a level of success and development unparalleled in world history. Now, after fifty years of unbroken leadership in the aerospace and aviation fields, the United States is facing an aggressive challenge from the European Union for this market. Losing our global dominance of this market would cost American jobs, adversely affect our national security and would allow one of our nation's most important industries to decline."

In recent years, America's global market share of the aerospace and aviation industry has declined to less than 50%, at the same time, research and development funding has been cut in half. Additionally, the European Union has developed a plan called "Vision 2020" which is an ambitious timetable for the development of new technology to surpass aerospace development in the U.S. by the year 2020. The legislation, the Aeronautics Research and Development Revitalization Act, would combat this effort by heavily investing R&D funding into what will be the next generation of aerospace technology, with a focus on fuel efficiency and reducing the noise and emissions generated by modern aircraft.

The initiative would serve to develop and demonstrate technologies - within a decade -that would enable American industry to build commercial aircraft that would have no adverse noise impacts on the communities surrounding the airports, would be highly fuel-efficient, and would have low emissions of carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide. It is a five-year authorization bill which would increase NASA's aeronautics R&D budget dramatically, bringing funding to \$1.15 billion by 2007. Funding for FAA would increase to \$550 million by 2007. Additionally, the bill establishes a focal point for aeronautics R&D within NASA by re-establishing an Office of Aeronautics reporting directly to the NASA Administrator.

"Congress and the Administration must take action now to counter a steep decline in American research and development spending as well as the European 'Vision 2020' plan by adopting an equally aggressive strategy to ensure America maintains our leadership in the aerospace and aviation fields. This R&D initiative addresses the most pressing environmental and economic challenges that have constrained the growth in aviation to date, but it will help the American aviation industry maintain its leadership in existing and anticipated markets as well as work to open up new markets. This legislation will challenge NASA, the industry, and academia to come up with revolutionary approaches to the propulsion, structures, avionics, and other technologies needed for such an initiative to succeed," said Larson.

Both private and federal funds dedicated to research and development for aerospace and aviation have fallen from a total of \$30 billion in 1985 to under \$14 billion in 1999, the latest year for which data is available. This downward trend has coincided with a similar trend in the U.S. share of the world aerospace market, which declined from about 70% of the global market to less than 50% now. Furthermore, the Administration has proposed to further cut aeronautics research by \$58 million at NASA and \$20 million at FAA for next year.

-30-