

On the Shuttle Science Payload Program: Letter Report

Space Science Board, Commission on Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Resources, National Research Council

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On the Shuttle Science Payload Program

On June 20, 1985, Space Science Board Chair Thomas M. Donahue sent the following letter to Dr. Burton Edelson, associate administrator for NASA's Office of Space Science and Applications.

As you know, the Space Science Board has expressed concern on several occasions over the state of the shuttle science payload program, and we were aware that the program was undergoing a critical assessment within the agency. At its last meeting, the Board heard the results of this review and the plans to revitalize the program.

The SSB commends NASA for: (a) supporting the development of a number of new scientific payloads which are now ready for shuttle flight and (b) for generating a coherent, realistic plan for resuming the development and providing for the flight of a significant number of additional shuttle payloads. The new plan promises greatly increased access to space over the next five years, with the potential of considerably improving the vitality of several scientific areas. Because an essential element in the new plan is the availability of timely flight and reflight opportunities, NASA is urged to make a strong commitment to maintaining the planned level of space science flights as the Space Transportation System becomes fully operational.