

Washington D.C. – Congressman Kevin McCarthy today announced that the long-term Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Bill will extend the 'learning period' for the commercial spaceflight industry – essentially protecting it from government overregulation – to promote continued innovation, growth and job creation in this cutting-edge sector of our economy.

"The commercial spaceflight industry is already having a profound economic impact right in our backyard, and this action ensures that it can keep on innovating and creating jobs," said McCarthy. "This industry has boomed over the past several years in part because of smart policy that tempered government overregulation. And from SpaceShipOne to Stratolaunch Systems and the impressive increase in commercial spaceflight investment and jobs at the Mojave Air & Space Port over the past ten years, it is clear that great things can happen when government gets out of the way of innovation. By extending the learning period, we're opening the door for continued growth and job creation right here in Kern County, while also helping keep America at the forefront of space travel and exploration. I look forward to seeing what comes next from this burgeoning industry"

Industry leaders agree that this action will lead to further innovation, technological advancement and job creation:

Commercial Spaceflight Federation Chairman and Space Adventures Chairman & CEO Eric Anderson – "We applaud Congressman McCarthy's foresight in understanding how crucial the commercial space industry is to the growth of our economy. America is a country of great achievements and we want to continue cultivating the great thinkers and entrepreneurs who improve our future. To do that, we need leadership and policies that create an environment where innovation and progress thrive. That type of leadership is exactly what Congressman McCarthy provides."

XCOR Aerospace Chief Executive Officer Jeff Greason – "The action taken by Congress will preserve the regulatory regime for commercial space which continues to attract space companies from around the world to do business in the United States. This regime, under which the FAA can generate any safety regulation for which real flight experience shows a demonstrated need, while avoiding regulations based on speculations or opinion about future events, allows new innovations to be tried as quickly as possible. We applaud all those in Congress who moved this legislation forward, and thank Congressman McCarthy for his leadership"

Sierra Nevada Space Systems' Mark Sirangelo – "America needs positive leadership today to help move us forward on a path of growth. We have seen such leadership in the actions taken today by Congress under the cooperative guidance of Congressman McCarthy and Senator Reid. Providing a predictable long-term path for regulation will enable the substantial technology and job creation already being generated by the United States Commercial Space Industry to continue and accelerate. Our U.S. space industry can and will return our country's human spaceflight and is committed to do so as safely, affordably and rapidly as possible."

President & CEO of Virgin Galactic and The Spaceship Company George Whitesides – "This extension will play a critical role in ensuring that the U.S. remains the home of aerospace innovation. Each of the companies in this sector is fully committed to developing safe vehicles and systems. Thanks to the leadership of Congressman McCarthy, and the certainty offered by this extension, Virgin Galactic and other companies will be able to continue creating new jobs across the country."

Mojave Air and Space Port Chief Executive Officer Stuart Witt – "This is welcome news for our community, state and nation. This will prevent onerous regulations from hampering a burgeoning commercial space industry that will provide tremendous economic and technological advances, not only in California but across the nation. At the Mojave Air and Spaceport, we have innovators and entrepreneurs that are leading the world in a new space era, and we applaud the efforts of Congressman McCarthy for his steadfast support, leadership and vision with the entrepreneurs of our new industry."

Background:

In 2004, Congress enacted the Commercial Space Launch Amendments Act (CSLAA), which streamlined the regulatory process for the commercial spaceflight industry. The law empowered the FAA to regulate the industry, but included an eight-year 'learning period' before the agency could begin issuing regulations designed solely for the protection of passengers. While there have been incredible advances in innovation, research and development over the past eight years, there has yet to be a licensed private commercial spaceflight. The new FAA Reauthorization Bill extends the 'learning period' for four years. This enables the commercial spaceflight industry to work toward and potentially conduct initial licensed commercial space launches over the next four years and obtain real-world data that FAA can use to develop future regulations. This common sense approach will help ensure the commercial spaceflight industry can continue to innovate, grow and create jobs.

