



**United States Department of State**

*Bureau of Oceans and International  
Environmental and Scientific Affairs*

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

September 24, 2008

Mr. Tommaso Sgobba  
President, International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety  
Postbus 127  
2200AC Noordwijk  
The Netherlands

Dear Mr. Sgobba:

At the request of the Federal Aviation Administration's Office of Commercial Space Transportation, the Department of State has reviewed the International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety's (IAASS) proposed "Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Cooperation on Civil and Commercial Space Safety Standards" (the "MoU proposal"). Although we believe that the space safety profession can greatly benefit from the international collaboration of space safety practitioners in organizations such as IAASS, the United States Government does not believe that a set of international space safety standards of the type in the IAASS MoU proposal is necessary at this time.

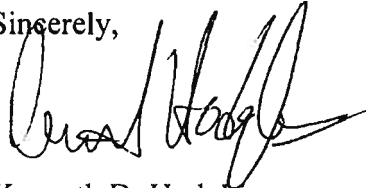
International cooperation is a fundamental element of the space policies of the United States and other responsible space-faring nations. The United States has been a leading supporter of international cooperation to mitigate orbital debris and to preserve the space environment for future generations.

In this regard, the United States has been pleased to support a recent initiative by the Government of France to establish an informal working group that brings together experts from the public and private space sectors to explore additional measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of space activities. The next meeting of this group will take place in the United Kingdom on October 3, on the margins of the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual International Astronautics Congress in Glasgow, Scotland. As this informal working group develops consensus on specific measures, the results may be forwarded to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for consideration as part of a set of "Best Practice Guidelines" for safe space operations. We understand that you have been in contact with the Chair of this working group, Gerard Brachet, and that IAASS participation in this activity would be welcomed.

The U.S. also supports a joint United Nations IAEA/COPUOS Joint Experts Group (JEG) that is developing a safety framework for use of nuclear power sources (NPS) in outer space. A NASA expert, on behalf of the JEG, will be giving a presentation on their efforts at the upcoming IAASS conference in Rome.

Although we cannot offer our support to your specific proposal, U.S. Government officials and experts will continue to participate in IAASS events such as the Conference on Space Flight Safety, October 21-23, 2008, as appropriate. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me call me at +1-202-663-2398.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth D. Hodgkins", written over a white background.

Kenneth D. Hodgkins

Director,

Office of Space and Advanced Technology

Cc:

Dr. George C. Nield, Associate Administrator for Commercial Space  
Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

Mr. Bryan O'Connor, Chief of Safety and Mission Assurance, National  
Aeronautics and Space Administration