

November 2, 2019

The Honorable James F. Bridenstine
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E St SW
Washington, DC 20546-0002

Dear Mr. Bridenstine:

I write today to inform you that your agency is the most recent recipient of my Golden Fleece Award. I am awarding this to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for poor use of taxpayer funds in its response to reports of illegal drug use among federal contractors.

Under the Drug-free Workplace Act (DFWA) of 1988¹, the use, possession, and distribution of illegal drugs is prohibited at federal contracting worksites. Additionally, employers are required to, in good faith, maintain a drug-free workplace. Further, regardless of whether a state has legalized marijuana, recreational marijuana possession and use is still illegal under federal law and violators may face prosecution.

According to an October 16, 2019 *Politico* article, following concerns over alleged illegal marijuana use by executives of the federal contractor SpaceX, NASA mandated an internal review of multiple contractors' workplace environments² and then provided \$5 million in taxpayer funds to one of the contractors, SpaceX, to fund their review.

This is disturbing on a number of levels.

First, it is disturbing that NASA gave such an amount of funds to a company to do what they already are required to do under the DFWA as a federal contractor, namely establishing and administering a drug-free awareness program,³ when these funds could have been used to fund other priorities crucial to national security. Second, it is of concern that NASA made funds available to only one of multiple contractors, appearing to pick favorites, and I would invite you to investigate this further.

¹ Pub. L. No. 100-690

² Feldscher, J. (2019, October 16). NASA paid SpaceX for safety review after Musk smoked pot. *Politico*. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.com/news/2019/10/16/nasa-musk-weed-048099>

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance and Mental Health Services Administration. *Drug-Free Workplace Programs*. "Federal Contractors and Grantees." November 2, 2015.
<<https://www.samhsa.gov/workplace/legal/federal-laws/contractors-grantees>>

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In summary, the grant of \$5 million to SpaceX was an incredible waste of taxpayer dollars, especially at a time when our nation is more than \$22 trillion in debt. Our federal agencies must be good stewards of taxpayers' dollars. Should you require any additional authority from Congress to address these concerns, I urge you to notify us as soon as possible. I thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you to address this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "French Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "F" and a distinct "H".

French Hill
Member of Congress