

11 December 2006

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
722 Hart Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Inouye:

I am writing on behalf of the IEEE-USA to urge your support for the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope (ATST). The ATST is a major part of a multi-agency program that contributes to space situational awareness by continuously monitoring the operational environment of space, such as space weather, e.g., solar flares, magnetic storms, etc. The ATST also allow for longer advanced warning of solar activity that could seriously impact military operations such as communications and the Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system, etc.

Realizing the necessity of being prepared before natural disasters occur was brought to our national attention recently with Hurricane Katrina. As such we need to continue to look for other situations in which we could be prepared before they natively impact critical elements of importance to the nation. One critical example would be the loss of the availability of our present and future space-based assets relating to communications, location determination, environmental sensing, reconnaissance, and other defense applications due to an environment caused as a result of adverse space weather.

I urge you to approve the \$10 million that has previously been allocated to complete the development and construction of the ATST, which has been under study by the Air Force, the National Science Foundation, and the astronomical community. These funds would be used to grind and polish the approximately 4 meter ATST mirror whose pouring of the mirror blank and its finishing would take approximately four years and is the long-term item in its construction. In order to prevent a potential disaster as a result of the loss of space-based assets, we strong recommend that you support this project.

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Sincerely,



Ralph W. Wyndrum, Jr., Eng.Sc.D.
President, IEEE-USA

(SAMPLE LETTER TO SELECTED SENATE LEADERS)