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*Matt Jeneroux*

Member of Parliament / Député  
Edmonton Riverbend / Edmonton Riverbend

The Hon. Navdeep Bains  
Minister of Innovation, Science and Development  
C.D. Howe Building  
235 Queen Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5

May 31, 2018  
OTTAWA

Dear Minister Bains,

I am writing to you with respect to the long-awaited Canadian space strategy. It was back in December 2016 that your government first committed to producing a long-term Canadian space strategy. At the time, you committed to a June 2017 release date, as well as to renew and make new appointments to the Space Advisory Board to conduct consultations on creating that strategy. The Board was not put in place until April 18, 2017 – a sure sign that the June 2017 strategy was already on a delayed schedule.

The consultations have come and gone, ending in May 2017 when the Board had been in place for just over one month. However, following the release of the 2018 federal budget, the Board sent an email to stakeholders to express that they were “very disappointed with Budget 2018 as it did not include funding to address a space strategy.” This wording draws concern that the well overdue strategy has yet to reach even the drafting stage.

In the meantime, the Canadian aerospace and satellite sector has been bleeding talent. In 2016, your government approved the sale of Cambridge, Ontario-based space firm COM DEV to the American company Honeywell. In the fall of 2017, Honeywell announced that it was laying off COM DEV

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employees due to a downturn in the space and satellite industry. Local media outlets estimated 140 of the 400 employees (35%) at the Cambridge plant were let go.

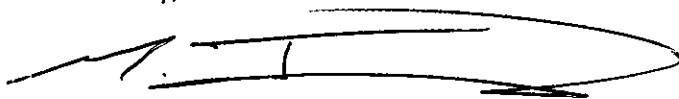
In October 2017, MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd. (MDA) announced their intent to rebrand and incorporate as an American company called Maxar Technologies. MDA is famously known for creating the Canadarm and RADARSAT-2 – two projects Canadians take great pride in, and supported with their tax dollars. In 2008, U.S. company Alliant Techsystems attempted a takeover of MDA that was blocked by our previous government on the basis that MDA had been a beneficiary of generous government funding for their research, and that the sale would mean a loss of good jobs in Canada. The now Minister of Transport gave a media interview at the time expressing how damaging the loss of MDA could be to the Canadian space sector. In a CBC interview published on January 11, 2008, Mr. Garneau said keeping MDA in Canada “involves a level of commitment, and that means making it viable for a company to do business here.” This government has failed to do so, and now those good jobs will be lost.

A second warning Mr. Garneau expressed in that same article is that in losing MDA as a Canadian company, Canada would be handing over operation of the RADARSAT-2 satellite to a U.S. company. This is the situation we are finding ourselves in now, as U.S.-based Maxar Technologies is now ultimately the owner of RADARSAT-2. This is of concern for Canadians because RADARSAT-2 conducts highly detailed surveillance of our Arctic region, and sells that data to third parties. I would like to know if your government has discussed this matter with Maxar Technologies, and how your government plans on limiting risks to Canadian Arctic sovereignty and privacy associated with this new management structure.

Finally, and most recently, Canada has been forced to pull out of the high-profile space telescope project led by NASA – the Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST). The reason cited for Canada stepping down from the project was a lack of funding. Our space sector is taking an economic hit, as well as a reputational one on our ability to fulfill international commitments.

Minister, you have been asked about the delayed strategy on numerous occasions and have repeatedly failed to provide a firm timeline. I urge you to make good on your commitment, and deliver the strategy as soon as possible. We are losing high quality Canadian aerospace and satellite talent in the meantime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Jeneroux', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Matt Jeneroux, MP  
Shadow Minister for Science