

Senators want space shuttle to keep flying

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Senators from Texas and Florida, the states most associated with the space program, want no interruption in NASA's manned flights.

Kay Bailey Hutchison, a Texas Republican, and Bill Nelson, a Florida Democrat, have sponsored legislation that would bar NASA from retiring the space shuttle orbiter until its replacement is ready, Space News reports.

Mike Griffin, NASA's administrator, plans to retire the shuttle in 2010. While he plans to speed development of the Crew Exploration Vehicle, he describes the 2010 date as firm for the shuttle.

Hutchison and Nelson included their mandate on the shuttle in the Senate version of a NASA appropriations bill. The language is not expected to be in the House version of the bill.

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