

# AIRSHIP ACT

## The "Airship Improvement Research for Safety and Humanitarian Innovation Projects" Act

*Endorsed by University of Akron and Goodyear*

### **Background:**

Airships are aerial vehicles whose method of achieving lift and propulsion is derived from the vehicle's structure, which is filled with a stable, lighter-than-air gas to create atmospheric buoyancy, or lift. In certain new hybrid airship models the lift is enhanced by the features of an aerodynamic hull, engines, and other elements of the vehicle. Simpler versions, dating back to the nineteenth century, were some of the first ways to navigate through the air. While airships were competitors to airplanes at one point in history, this mode of transport is not necessarily meant to compete with other traditional modes today. Instead, it could complement other methods of aerial transportation while offering solutions to some of our nation's most pressing problems.

Airship technology can have diverse functions in commercial and non-commercial applications. Most people are familiar with the Goodyear blimp which is used for promotional services. Blimps are a type of airship whose structure is maintained by the pressure of its gases. Goodyear in the last decade has replaced its fleet of blimps with rigid airships, which have a structure supported by an internal framework, in order to fly faster, carry more passengers, and be equipped with state-of-the-art avionics and flight controls.

The AIRSHIP Act would authorize research into additional civil use cases for airships that could contribute to economical, sustainable, and clean air cargo transportation, support disaster response efforts, and provide humanitarian aid to people in need. Especially in the face of challenges such as global pandemics and climate related disasters, airships are uniquely capable of accessing remote locations or damaged landscapes to deliver resources and services where traditional aircraft often cannot. This bill could enable and reintroduce the world to practical, economical, and environmentally friendly airship transportation.

### **What does this bill do?**

This bill authorizes NASA to establish aeronautics research and technology initiatives for enhanced airship safety, noise, and improved environmental impacts. It also gives NASA the authority to establish a competitive program that awards grants to teams of researchers from universities, industry, and government to conduct airship vehicle technology research.