

COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY**  
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)**  
Markup of *The NASA Authorization Act for 2016 and 2017* (H.R. 2039)

**Chairman Smith:** Good morning. Today we mark-up H.R. 2039, the NASA Authorization Act for 2016 and 2017.

There is a reason why the National Air and Space Museum is the most visited museum in America. Space exploration captures the imagination of people around the world and encourages future generations to dream big, work hard and shoot for the stars.

NASA has accomplished some of the most awe-inspiring and technologically advanced feats in the history of humankind.

Throughout its history, our space program has set goals that required vision and offered challenges that have led to innovation and the development of new technologies.

New technologies enable new discoveries about the universe and give us hope that we can find solutions to problems here on Earth.

Space exploration is an investment in our nation's future—often the distant future. And many technologies that Americans use on a daily basis were born out of NASA research.

These include heart rate monitors, athletic shoes, air and water purifiers, cordless tools, and laptop computers. Other space-spinoffs include GPS, high-definition TV and laser surgery. These all improve Americans' quality of life and save lives.

Today's bill is a step in the right direction to ensure that NASA will continue to innovate and inspire.

The scientists, engineers and astronauts who find creative and new solutions to the challenges of exploring the universe serve as role models for our students. They motivate young people to study science, math, engineering and computer science.

The Authorization levels for FY16 and FY17 included in this bill provide NASA with the resources necessary to remain a leader in space exploration in a time of tight budget realities.

Unlike the President's budget request, this NASA Authorization complies with the Budget Control Act. The bill allows for additional funding support only if it is budget neutral and corresponding off-sets are identified.

The bill funds NASA at its top-line request of \$18.5 billion for FY16 and \$18.8 billion for FY17, while including necessary additional resources for national priorities such as the Space Launch System and Orion.

It also establishes a balance between the exploration and science accounts by funding both equally at \$4.95 billion. The bill balances funding across all of the Science Divisions. It increases funding for the James Webb Space Telescope to enable it to stay on track. And it increases funding for Astrophysics and Heliophysics to study our universe and our sun.

The bill increases funding for commercial crew by \$439 million; the International Space Station by \$124 million; exploration research and development by \$68 million; Safety, Security, and Mission Support, which funds center operations, by \$84 million; and construction and environmental cleanup by \$53 million. The bill also restores \$30 million in cuts in the President's Budget to NASA's education program.

For 50 years, the U.S. has led the world in space exploration. We must ensure that the U.S. continues to lead in space for the next 50 years. And we must continue to invest in NASA as the only American agency responsible for space exploration.

I encourage Members to vote for the bill.

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