



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Media Contact: Kristina Baum
(202) 225-6371

Statement of Space Subcommittee Chairman Brian Babin (R-Texas)
NASA: Past, Present, and Future

Chairman Babin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. I'd like to welcome you all here today for an important discussion on where NASA has been, where it is, and where it might go. I find it difficult to imagine a more qualified panel of witnesses with more personal insight and experience than the one before us today. Thank you all very much for taking time out of your busy schedules to be with us.

America's civil space program is nearing its seventieth anniversary. In the seven decades since NASA's birth, astronauts have walked on the lunar surface, spacecraft have ventured out into the interstellar void, and telescopes have discovered thousands of planets orbiting other stars in our galaxy.

But those exciting achievements were not free. It is very difficult to explore a universe of infinite wonder with a finite budget.

We must prioritize our visions and destinations in a way that reflects responsible stewardship of American taxpayer dollars.

Fortunately, the election of a new Administration and the start of a new Congress have given us an important opportunity to think about our space program and consider bold new directions for our future in space.

For instance, should we return to the Moon?

How can we ensure that the progress made on deep space exploration capabilities like the Space Launch System and Orion continues in a fiscally responsible manner?

Can public-private partnerships and international collaboration augment taxpayer investment? How would those partnerships be structured to ensure safety, attract private sector contributions, and provide value to the taxpayer?

Can we both extend ISS operations past 2024 and conduct deep space exploration without significant increases in NASA's budget?

NASA's hard work over many decades is on track to provide the nation with the tools it needs to make a bigger, bolder future in space. Now is the time to start talking about what that future will look like.

I hope that our witnesses here today can help make that conversation as lively and vibrant as possible. Our continued leadership in space is not just about exploration. Our national security, international standing, and economic competitiveness all depend on our leadership in space.

I couldn't be more excited to discuss these crucial questions with today's witnesses. Thank you all, again, for being here. I look forward to your testimony.

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