



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Full Committee Hearing:

A Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Proposal for NASA

June 23, 2021

Good morning, and welcome back, Mr. Administrator. I say welcome back, because when he was first elected to Congress, Senator Nelson served on our Committee. In fact, he chaired the Space subcommittee for six years, during which time he flew into space aboard the Space Shuttle *Columbia*.

And now we welcome him back today to testify before our Committee as NASA Administrator after a distinguished career in both the House and the U.S. Senate. We all look forward to your testimony, Mr. Administrator.

It is no secret to my colleagues that I am a strong supporter of NASA. It is one of the crown jewels of the nation's R&D enterprise, and equally importantly, it is a source of inspiration for our young people, and indeed for people young and old around the world. Because NASA turns daring aspirations into reality, whether it is flying a helicopter above the dusty expanses of Mars, pushing the boundaries of aeronautics research here on Earth, working with 14 other nations to build and operate an international space station in Earth orbit, building a fleet of spacecraft to monitor our changing climate, or searching for life elsewhere in the universe.

I like to say the Science, Space, and Technology Committee is the Committee for the Future. And I think that is equally true of NASA. The dedicated men and women of NASA are helping create our future in space and here on Earth, and they should take great pride both in what they have accomplished to date and in what they are striving to accomplish in the days and years to come.

Yet turning NASA's aspirations into reality will take more than determination or even good budgets. For example, to execute an ambitious national initiative like the Artemis Moon-Mars initiative will require clear goals and objectives, thoughtful planning, realistic scheduling, a credible organizational and management structure, and attention to the multitude of details that spell the difference between success and catastrophic failure.

And also critical to Artemis' success will be finding out as soon as possible where the problems are that need attention. That is why I have urged that it be an early priority to carry out an

independent review of the entire Artemis initiative so that you can take whatever corrective actions are needed as soon as possible.

The lessons of the past are clear: failing to uncover problems because of arbitrary schedule pressure invariably winds up costing more in both money and delays, and in increased risk. If Congress is going to be asked to provide increased funding for Artemis, it first will need to have confidence that NASA's Artemis initiative is on a credible path to success.

Another issue needing attention is the future of the International Space Station. It will not last forever. We need to know how long it can remain viable structurally and operationally. We need a clear plan for transitioning to what comes next, and we need to know what the future of the United States and its international partners in low Earth orbit should be, especially given the reality of the new Chinese space station.

I could go on, but as I said, these are very challenging times for NASA. However, make no mistake—this Committee wants NASA to succeed. I hope that today's hearing will be just the start of a continuing dialogue and collaboration with you, Mr. Administrator, and with that, I want to again welcome you, and I look forward to your testimony.