

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



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**Statement of Space Subcommittee Chairman Steven Palazzo (R-Miss.)  
Hearing on “An Overview of the National Science Foundation Budget for Fiscal Year 2014”**

**Chairman Palazzo:** Good afternoon. I would like to welcome everyone to our hearing today and I especially want to thank our witness, NASA Administrator Charlie Bolden, for joining us. I know many people put in a lot of effort preparing for these hearings, and we appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule to appear before the subcommittee.

The purpose of today’s hearing is to review the Administration’s fiscal year 2014 budget request for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and to examine its priorities and challenges. Before we review the details of the NASA request, I feel it is necessary to express my disappointment that the Administration has been unable to fulfill its responsibilities for a timely budget as required under the Budget and Accounting Act. In the future, I hope the Administration will be on time.

This year NASA is requesting \$17.7 billion, a decrease of \$55 million from fiscal year 2012 and \$733 million less than fiscal year 2011. In a time of budgetary restraints such as the one our nation is facing, we must ensure that every agency is doing its part, and I believe the topline request for NASA is fair in this regard.

There are several areas of the request that I believe require serious deliberation and thoughtful debate. Within the Human Operations and Exploration Mission Directorate I am most concerned with the requests for the Commercial Crew Program, the Space Launch System and the Orion crew capsule. Certainly the successful launches of both SpaceX and Orbital Sciences are significant milestones and they should be applauded for those achievements, however, I continue to be concerned about the strategy NASA is employing to fund crew transportation systems.

We must recognize the times in which we are operating, if funding multiple companies to develop these systems is no longer feasible, we must reevaluate our strategy. Our first priority must be getting American astronauts launching on American rockets from American soil as soon as is safely possible. I am skeptical about continuing to develop a market as broad and as deep as NASA suggests because I think it could delay that goal. This is a conversation I anticipate revisiting as the committee prepares for the NASA reauthorization later this year.

Additionally, I am concerned about the requests for the Space Launch System and the Orion crew capsule. While Congress continues to insist that these two programs be priorities, NASA has once again offered a budget that does not demonstrate a sustained commitment to their development. I remain committed to ensuring our nation has a robust exploration program and I am curious what milestones or important testing NASA believes can be pushed out in the schedule to accommodate the lower request. I am also troubled by NASA’s requested reductions in the Science, Aeronautics, and Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorates, while asking for \$105 million for an asteroid retrieval mission that

was announced seemingly out of the blue. This request was not accompanied by a budget profile, technical plan, or long-term strategy. Yet NASA has asked Congress to commit to funding the first steps. I look forward to hearing more about this mission and how NASA intends to cover the \$2.6 billion that the Keck Institute for Space Studies estimated it would cost.

In the Science Mission Directorate, the Administration has requested authority to transfer several climate sensors from the troubled Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS) and the Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR) out of the NOAA budget and assign them to the Earth Science program budget. The budget request also transfers Landsat Data Continuity Mission follow-on activities from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to NASA, and the development infrastructure for Radioisotope Power Systems from the Department of Energy (DOE) to NASA. I am worried that NASA is footing the bill for other agency requirements; all while being asked to take an overall budget cut.

Finally, I am concerned by the growth of the Space Technology program. The request for the Space Technology program this year is a 62% increase over the appropriation it received in fiscal year 2012. This is a significant amount of growth in only two years. Although NASA has announced that it will organize Space Technology as a mission directorate, it has not requested authority to do so in the upcoming authorization bill and it is not entirely clear how the projects in Space Technology differ from those in the other mission directorates.

Mr. Administrator, like you, I am committed to ensuring that our nation has a robust space program that will continue to lead the world for generations. I am concerned however that NASA has neglected Congressional funding priorities and been distracted by new and questionable missions that detract from our ultimate deep space exploration goals. These distractions also take up precious lines in the budget at a time when NASA can least afford it.

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