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**Statement of Space Subcommittee Chairman Steven Palazzo (R-Miss.)
Hearing on NASA Infrastructure: Enabling Discovery and Ensuring Capability**

Chairman Palazzo: The purpose of today's hearing is to address NASA's complex infrastructure issues. This is a tall order for an agency that is the ninth largest Federal Government real property holder. That includes an inventory of more than 124,000 acres, and more than 44 million square feet within approximately 4,900 buildings and other structures. However, nearly 80 percent of the agency's facilities date back to the Apollo era and are 40 or more years old. A 2012 study by NASA estimated that NASA may have as many as 865 unneeded facilities, with maintenance costs of over \$24 million a year. Also, NASA has a backlog of over \$2.19 billion in deferred maintenance.

In order to better manage its infrastructure and facilities, NASA has established an Agency Master Plan to align its infrastructure with its mission and set up a Technical Capabilities Assessment Study to identify and evaluate Center capabilities against Agency needs. Also, various Centers are implementing innovative ways to address these infrastructure challenges such as the Langley 20 Year revitalization plan to right-size the Center's facilities and bring about greater efficiencies. Despite these efforts, NASA will continue to face challenges with right-sizing its infrastructure as long as it does not have a coherent and consistent roadmap for exploration.

Since 2005, Congress has provided consistent guidance on how NASA should develop such a roadmap as well as the necessary funding on a go-as-you-can-pay basis. Despite our efforts, OMB and the recent Administration have chosen to divert resources from exploration to other efforts. The President's 2009 cut of \$1 billion from the exploration budget, and the roughly 45 percent increase in the Earth Science budget since 2007 are just a few examples.

Until the Administration allows NASA to develop a coherent exploration strategy, rather than pushing NASA toward costly, complex and controversial distractions such as the Administration's asteroid proposals, NASA will never know what infrastructure and facilities it actually needs.

Setting aside this issue, I believe there are things that the Administration and Congress can do to allow NASA to better manage its facilities. NASA already has authorities to enter into Enhanced Use Lease agreements to maintain underutilized infrastructure, Space Act Agreements, traditional leases, and various other incentives.

I hope the witnesses will be able to discuss how NASA is using these existing authorities – are they being fully utilized, does NASA have robust policies to determine which authority should be used for each facility, and whether Agency oversight is sufficient to ensure fairness and protect taxpayer equities.

In addition to existing authorities, NASA and stakeholders have recommended various additional authorities such as conveyance authority, expanded Enhanced Use Lease, the establishment of a capital

fund, and enhanced authority to cooperate with the commercial launch sector. While these proposals are promising, I believe that they must be accompanied by strong oversight provisions to ensure that taxpayer investments are protected.

While the NASA Authorization Act of 2013 funds key NASA missions, maintains infrastructure and even increases funding for Center Management and Operations, it does not attempt to solve all of the agency's complex infrastructure issues. Instead, we have allowed time for opportunities such as this hearing to gain better understanding of NASA's challenges and options. I hope the insights we gain today will be useful as we move forward with the NASA Authorization Act.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the intense amount of interest that Members and stakeholders have in NASA's infrastructure. This is exhibited by the recent debates surrounding the Kennedy Space Center's Launch Complex 39A, the Shuttle landing facility, and the Shiloh site, as well as the Johnson Space Center's arc jet, cleanup of the Santa Susanna Site, test stand use at Stennis Space Center, as well as Hanger One and Moffett field at Ames Research Center, to mention just a few. I know many members have opinions on these topics that directly impact their districts. I look forward to working with my colleagues, as well as NASA and the Administration to tackle these challenges.

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