

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



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)  
Hearing on An Overview of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration budget  
for Fiscal year 2015**

**Chairman Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And we appreciate Administrator Bolden appearing before us once again to present the President's budget request for NASA.

While we may disagree on a few topics, I think we share the same desire to ensure that NASA remains the world's preeminent space agency so that our nation continues to lead the world in space exploration and discovery. That is why I am concerned with the President's Fiscal Year 2015 budget request. Just three months ago, Congress and the President reached an agreement on NASA's budget.

Now, just a few weeks later, the President recommends a \$185 million cut to NASA. It also again seeks to fund an Asteroid Redirect or Retrieval Mission despite what one article this week described as "...scant support in Congress and similarly muted interest in the science community..."

The Administration continues to push this mission on NASA without any connection to a larger exploration roadmap and absent support from the scientific community or NASA's own advisory bodies. It is a mission without a realistic budget, without a destination, and without a certain launch date.

The Committee has heard a number of concerns about the mission, as well as many promising alternatives. For instance, the Committee recently held a hearing on the potential for a flyby mission to Mars and Venus in 2021. While the mission is not without challenges, it is intriguing and would catch the public's imagination.

Unfortunately, the budget underfunds the Space Launch System and Orion programs, as well as the Planetary Science Division. The White House's approach has been to raid NASA's budget to fund the Administration's environmental agenda. There are 13 other agencies that are involved in climate change research, yet only one conducts space exploration. In the last seven years, the Earth Science Division funding has increased over 63 percent.

NASA needs to remember its priorities – and that priority is space exploration.

I'm glad to see that NASA is working to complete the James Webb Space Telescope and to initiate the production of the Wide Field Infrared Space Telescope as well. And NASA finally has included a budget line for a Europa mission, even if it is just for one year and too little.

Over the last two years, Congress has funded a Europa mission at \$75 million and \$80 million. So the one year funding of \$15 million is as disappointing as the potential life that may exist under the ice of Jupiter's moon is fascinating.

Our leadership in space has slipped. The Administration should step back, look at the Agency as a whole, and work to put it on the long term path to achieve worthy and inspirational goals on behalf of our nation.

Space exploration inspires American students and excites scientists. If we want to continue to be a world leader and take giant leaps for mankind, NASA must ensure its budget reflects the importance of space exploration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

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