

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



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Full Committee Markup of Committee Print, NASA Authorization Act of 2013**

Chairman Smith: The Science, Space, and Technology Committee meets today to mark-up H.R. 2687, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2013.

The NASA Authorization Act offers us the opportunity to set goals and establish priorities for the greatest space program in the world. That is our responsibility—to take the initiative, make decisions and govern.

Since the last Congressional authorization for NASA in 2010, our Committee has benefited from much expert advice. Over the course of many hearings, we have heard testimony from NASA on its multi-mission programs, from distinguished scientists and astronauts about the new frontiers of space exploration, and have learned from seasoned aerospace program managers what large, complex space systems are needed to carry out NASA's missions. This information enables our Committee to provide a roadmap, with realistic budget authorizations, to accomplish NASA's goals.

We have based our authorization for NASA on a “go-as-we-can-afford-to-pay” strategy as reflected by the Budget Control Act of 2011. The Budget Control Act was endorsed by members on both sides of the aisle, and signed into law by the President. We should not ignore the law of the land even if we don't agree with it.

I remain hopeful that the House and Senate will find a mutually agreed-upon solution this fall to repeal and replace the Budget Control Act in order to deal with our nation's overall debt. Until such a deal is struck, we should stay within the overall funding caps of the Budget Control Act. And we should assume the same authorization level in 2014 that agencies like NASA received in appropriations this year.

Congressional spending in appropriations bills are constrained by the Budget Control Act. In my view, it would be irresponsible for the authorizing committee to ignore fiscal realities and leave hard decisions that we should make to others. In adhering to the Budget Control Act, the difference in the amount of funds authorized by this bill compared to the President's budget is only about five percent.

The desire by some members to draw partisan lines over that five percent is what leads the American people to be frustrated with Congress—and what leads Congress to be viewed as dysfunctional. If we followed the Budget Control Act, I do believe we could agree on mutual priorities for NASA. These priorities include funding the Space Launch System and Orion Crew Vehicle, the Commercial Crew program, keeping the International Space Station and Hubble Space Telescope operating, launching the James Webb Space Telescope and supporting NASA's unique planetary exploration program.

It's never too late to work together, and I am hopeful that my Democratic colleagues will agree to abide by the Budget Control Act. Meanwhile, we have a good bill before us that will maintain and, in some ways, even strengthen our space program.

I want to thank the Gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Palazzo, for his work on this bill and urge my colleagues to support it.

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