

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



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**Statement of Space Subcommittee Chairman Brian Babin (R-Texas)**  
*Exploration of the Solar System: From Mercury to Pluto and Beyond*

**Chairman Babin:** Space exploration is a challenging endeavor that distinguishes the United States as a global leader, supports innovation and economic growth, and inspires the next generation to build, explore, and discover.

The success of the Dawn mission to the asteroid Ceres and the New Horizons mission to Pluto demonstrate the national importance of space exploration and planetary science.

Unfortunately, year after year, the Obama Administration has consistently cut funding and deprioritized NASA space exploration and planetary science. It is imperative that Congress continue to reject the Administration's cuts and support a well-funded exploration program.

My congratulations to Dr. Stern, NASA, and the New Horizons team on a successful mission to Pluto. I thank the witnesses for being here today and look forward to their testimony.

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