

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



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**Statement of Space Subcommittee Chairman Steven Palazzo (R-Miss.)
Hearing on “The NASA Authorization Act of 2013”**

Chairman Palazzo: The discussion draft of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Act of 2013 before us today is the result of input from a wide variety of interests throughout the science and space communities. The outreach efforts of this Committee have been unprecedented and I am proud of the draft we have put together. My goal for this hearing is to ensure that all of our members have an opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and debate important topics. I expect the tenor of today’s hearing to be respectful. We are all here because we care about NASA and want it to succeed.

The draft bill includes a topline budget of over \$16.8 billion dollars and authorizes the agency for two years. This budget is consistent with the requirements of the Budget Control Act.

I will take a moment to point out that I and several of my colleagues sitting here in this room worked extremely hard to avoid getting to this point. We’ve offered solid solutions and replacements for these damaging cuts, and we stand ready to work with the Senate and the Administration to replace the sequester with responsible, strategic cuts. This authorization bill reflects a sincere effort to maximize return to the taxpayer while working to protect America’s role as the world leader in space exploration. It is realistic and reflective of the hard choices we must make as a nation and provides support for agreed-upon priorities. The stark reality is that if we fail to reform mandatory spending, discretionary funding for space, science, and research will continue to shrink.

The Administration must focus on core programs such as the Space Launch System and Orion crew capsule, the International Space Station, the James Webb Space Telescope and the Commercial Crew Program. The Space Launch System is authorized at over \$1.77 billion and the Orion crew capsule at \$1.2 billion. The SLS and Orion will take our astronauts deeper into space than ever before. I am committed to the success of these assets and ensuring their continued on-time development and appropriate prioritization moving forward. The Commercial Crew program is authorized at \$700 million, but let me be clear; this is not a blank check for the Administration. The bill includes several accountability measures and a flight readiness deadline of December 31, 2017. This deadline is not negotiable. NASA must do whatever is necessary in its acquisition model to meet this deadline, even if that means radically altering their current plans.

The International Space Station is authorized at over \$2.9 billion and the bill includes a framework for NASA to use for determining the future life of the Station. This committee intends to ensure the ISS is utilized to the greatest extent possible and that every dollar is efficiently allocated with a priority placed on microgravity research.

The \$4.62 billion authorized for the Science Mission Directorate ensures critical programs will continue on schedule including the James Webb Space Telescope and Planetary Science missions. Over the last

five years the Earth Science program has grown by more than 40% at the expense of other critical missions within the Science Mission Directorate and elsewhere in NASA. There are 13 agencies throughout the federal government that currently fund over \$2.5 billion in climate science research, but only one agency does space exploration and space science. This bill ensures a balanced portfolio of science mission programs by simply moderating the increases that Earth Science has received over the last 5 years.

The Aeronautics Mission Directorate promotes technology sharing among government agencies and infuses critical research and data into the commercial market. It is authorized at \$565 million with requirements for interagency roadmaps for various technology areas.

This bill authorizes \$500 million for the Space Technology program. This investment in game-changing technology development is crucial for future exploration missions --- both robotic and human. We also recognize the role this program can play in finding innovative solutions to tough problems.

The President's budget request this year included a major structural change to STEM programs at NASA. The full Science Committee held a hearing that revealed significant bipartisan concerns about this plan. While the committee generally supports consolidation of government programs to ensure efficiencies, this change was poorly conceived and is not ready for implementation. For this reason, the bill prohibits NASA from implementing those changes.

Another request in the President's budget was an Asteroid Retrieval Mission or ARM. While the committee supports the Administration's efforts to study Near Earth Objects, this proposal lacks in details, justification or support from NASA's own advisory bodies. Because the mission appears to be a costly and complex distraction, this bill prohibits NASA from doing any work on the project and we will work with appropriators to ensure the agency complies with this directive.

In addition to authorizing funding and giving direction to the Agency for critical missions, the Committee has included several measures to ensure good government practices and transparency within NASA including; reform for the use of Space Act Agreements, changes to termination liability requirements and stricter cost growth controls.

As people in our districts and across the nation continue to struggle to find jobs and put food on the table, we must ensure that every single dollar appropriated to NASA is spent effectively and efficiently. This bill provides common sense guidance and prioritizes those most critical NASA missions.

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