



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Eric Sorensen (D-IL)
of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics

Space & Aeronautics Subcommittee Hearing:
Returning to the Moon: Keeping Artemis on Track

January 17, 2024

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Lucas, for holding today's hearing *Returning to the Moon: Keeping Artemis on Track*.

I want to welcome our distinguished witnesses. Thank you for being here.

I was not alive during the Apollo 11 landing, but as the son of an aerospace engineer, and a meteorologist with a deep love of science, I know the profound impact it has had on our country and on the world. When I look up at the night sky, I wonder what is up there? I want us to go so I can know.

Today, we are examining NASA's Artemis program. This program, separated into several stages, is designed to bring humans, step by step, to the moon and beyond.

Artemis will inspire the next generation, strengthen our aerospace industry and international partnerships, and demonstrate capabilities needed to eventually send humans to Mars.

Last year, I was proud to host NASA astronaut, Dr. Kate Rubins, in my district. Dr. Rubins spoke about her excitement for the upcoming generation. She believes that first graders are the perfect age to one day go to Mars. What an exciting possibility for our nation's children!

The Artemis I mission was an important first uncrewed test and sent the Orion vehicle thousands of miles beyond the Moon before its return to Earth. Artemis II will test additional systems as it brings humans around the moon. And Artemis III will land humans back on the moon. The difficulty of these missions cannot be underestimated.

Last week, we learned that NASA is delaying the Artemis II and Artemis III missions by about a year. I stand behind NASA in prioritizing safety for Artemis, and I look forward to gaining further insight into the delays and any related costs.

Artemis requires a sustained national investment. In a 2021 report, the NASA Office of Inspector General said, “NASA is projected to spend \$93 billion on the Artemis effort from FY 2012 through FY 2025.” And that’s even before we land our astronauts on the Moon.

As authorizers with oversight responsibility, this committee needs to ensure those investments are made wisely.

This hearing provides a timely opportunity to get both an update on the progress and an understanding of the pressing issues for the Artemis program, including,

- Do NASA and Congress have an appropriate level of understanding of the cost of key Artemis systems, individual Artemis missions, and a sustained lunar exploration effort?
- What is on the critical path for returning humans to the Moon and what is the plan for addressing those challenges?
- How would an FY2024 budget at enacted FY2023 levels, or even a cut below the FY 2023 appropriated levels, affect the Artemis program?
- How are NASA and its partners addressing risks and how will risk be communicated to the public?

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want Artemis to be safe and successful. Artemis and Moon to Mars are of tremendous importance to the United States and the world.

America’s international leadership and engagement in the Artemis program and the Artemis accords will promote peaceful, safe, and sustainable exploration of the Moon and other celestial bodies.

Thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.