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

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics Hearing:
Discovery on the Frontiers of Space: Exploring NASA's Science Mission
Tuesday, June 11, 2019

Good morning, and thank you Madame Chair for holding this hearing on "*Discovery on the Frontiers of Space: Exploring NASA's Science Mission*."

Scientific research has been part of the NASA mission since the agency's founding. The National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 includes "*The expansion of human knowledge of phenomena in the atmosphere and space*" as one of the eight objectives of the nation's aeronautical and space activities.

Since the 1958 Act, NASA and the nation have invested in the systematic scientific exploration of our planet, bodies in the solar system, the Sun, and the Universe that have answered many questions, and generated even more. That scientific exploration has come with surprises. For example, who would have imagined that Pluto may have active volcanoes spewing ice? Or that there is a mysterious force causing our Universe to expand at an accelerating rate?

NASA has been at the forefront of discoveries such as these in space and Earth science, since its inception, with a cadence of small, medium, and large missions and supporting research and technology that keep the public engaged, inspired, and learning. That's why it perplexes me as to why the Administration would even consider raiding Science to pay for a Moon program. Yet that may be where NASA is headed, despite the Administrator's assurances to the contrary.

The one-year budget amendment that came over in May would give the Administrator carte blanche authority to move funds among NASA's accounts from this year forward, if he determines that "the transfers are necessary in support of establishment of a U.S. strategic presence on the Moon." Why? Because the Administration, it seems, may not request in the coming years what NASA actually needs for its crash program to get astronauts to the Moon by 2024. According to media articles, NASA officials are stating that hard choices lie ahead and that NASA find money for the Moon program from within the agency's other programs.

This isn't a new tactic. The George W. Bush Administration, which initiated the last Moon program, tried the same approach. According to a 2006 National Academies report, the Bush Administration indicated its intention to cut significantly from Science to pay for its Moon program. The scars from those cuts are still felt today, especially in the life and physical sciences

research program, which experienced reductions that decimated the pipeline for microgravity research and drove scientists to other fields.

The talented women and men at NASA and its partner institutions deserve better. Those who have become acquainted with the NASA workforce know that they will work tirelessly in an effort to meet a goal. Passion can take us far, but it alone can't build us the rockets and landers, space suits and habitats, and all the other elements needed for a safe and sustainable Moon-Mars program.

NASA needs a solid plan, sufficient resources, people, and infrastructure over multiple years to enable deep space human exploration. Starving Science to fund human exploration is not the answer. I know our witnesses will have much to say about the opportunities and challenges facing NASA's space and Earth sciences. I look forward to their testimony.

Thank you and I yield back.