



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

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Full Committee Hearing:

*An Overview of the Budget Proposal for the National Aeronautics and Space
Administration for Fiscal Year 2024*

April 27, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Lucas, and welcome Administrator Nelson. We're pleased to have you with us today.

For the 11th consecutive year, NASA has been named the best place to work in the Federal government among large agencies. I want to congratulate you Administrator Nelson, your team, and all of the NASA civil servants for creating a leading workplace in the Federal government. People are the core of NASA's mission, and I thank them for their talent, dedication, and service.

And what they are doing is truly exceptional. There is much to celebrate in NASA's successes over the last year. The James Webb Space Telescope, which began science operations, is returning mind-blowing science, the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) demonstrated for the first time the ability to deflect an asteroid, a necessary tool should we ever be faced with the threat of an asteroid headed toward Earth. NASA also launched the Surface Water and Ocean Topography mission to provide unprecedented detail on our planet's freshwater and oceans. And last November, the nation and the world got to witness the historic Artemis I mission, NASA's first step toward our inspiring goal to send humans back to the Moon in preparation for Mars. These are incredible accomplishments, and there's so much more to come.

The President's Fiscal Year 2024 request for NASA is a strong step toward doing just that. The proposal for FY 2024 is \$27.2 billion, a 7.1 percent increase over the FY 2023 enacted appropriation. This request provides increases across NASA's science, space technology, aeronautics, exploration, STEM, and mission support activities.

NASA is a crown jewel in our nation's research and development enterprise, an engine of innovation and job-creation, and an ever increasingly important symbol of geopolitical soft power. I'm looking forward to today's discussion to gain a clear understanding of what NASA needs to carry out the challenging and inspiring goals that Congress has asked it to achieve.

I would be remiss if I didn't express my concern about the bill that the House passed yesterday, an estimated 22% reduction across all civilian agencies and I am concerned that this could have a bad impact on NASA. As I said last week, the Speaker's bill puts science at risk.

Would future Artemis missions need to be delayed, halted, and even eliminated? Would missions essential to observing our Earth and collecting data on natural hazards and climate change be delayed? One of the most complex scientific undertakings ever initiated—to return samples from the Martian

surface—would that be suspended? Space Grant awards and STEM programs would see reductions resulting in significantly decreased participation by students and educators, affecting efforts to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion in the NASA and aerospace workforce. And those are just a few examples.

Wouldn't this affect our universities, industry, our economy, and the many high-paying jobs that our investments in NASA provide to Americans?

Given the extent of NASA's cooperation and collaboration with other nations, could the damage spread beyond our borders? If the U.S. isn't leading international space efforts, others will step in.

We can't give up leadership in the international space efforts and we cannot cede our leadership in space and aeronautics to China.

Now more than ever we need to secure the health, strength, and future of our nation's civil space and aeronautics programs. NASA must have the people, resources, and infrastructure it needs to continue to succeed.

I look forward to working with Chairman Lucas and the Biden Administration to ensure that NASA can continue to lead this country and the world in discovery, exploration, innovation, and inspiration. Thank you and I yield back.