

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Ami Bera (D-CA)
of the Subcommittee on Space

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
“*James Webb Space Telescope: Program Breach and its Implications*”
July 25, 2018

Good morning, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding these hearings on “*James Webb Space Telescope: Program Breach and its Implications*”. I am pleased to see Administrator Jim Bridenstine make his first appearance before the full Committee. As most know, the Administrator sat on this side of the dais for several years. I look forward to working with him in his new capacity in the months ahead. I also want to thank Mr. Young who will be joining us on both panels today and tomorrow. Mr. Young, thank you for your willingness, time and time again over the years, to chair the many assessments you have been asked to undertake in reviewing space programs in difficulty.

Mr. Chairman, in many respects, these hearings are a continuation of the hearing the Space Subcommittee held just last month on NASA cost and schedule overruns. As we will hear today, JWST has encountered a significant schedule delay. This will translate into a new projected launch date of March 2021 and a program cost increase of about \$1 billion.

In terms of what we should focus on today, I hope that Mr. Young and the Administrator will address:

- How much confidence Congress can have in the March 2021 launch date in light of the IRB’s acknowledgment that some risks are not included in projecting that date;
- How Congress can measure NASA’s progress in implementing the findings and recommendations of the IRB report;
- The impacts of the JWST delay and cost increase, both on the Science Mission Directorate and agency-wide;
- Why issues identified in the 2010 JWST independent review regarding communications and program reporting appear to have been unaddressed; and
- When additional funding will be requested for JWST, and how much will be needed.

It is worth noting that despite the headline-grabbing finding of schedule and cost growth, the IRB concluded that “*JWST should continue based on its extraordinary scientific potential and critical role in maintaining U.S. leadership in astronomy and astrophysics.*” That is why I look forward, over the course of the next two days, to having frank discussions with the people most involved in moving us forward towards commissioning this tremendous observatory.

With that, I yield back.