

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson [D-TX]  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

*“Deep Space Exploration: The Impact of the President’s Budget”*

Space Subcommittee Hearing

October 9, 2015

Good morning, and welcome to our witnesses. I look forward to your testimony. In view of the uncertainties in today’s schedule, I will be brief in my remarks so that we can have enough time for a good discussion with our witnesses.

This Committee has long supported a strong human space flight and exploration program for the nation. I am excited about the prospect of America leading an international team to the surface of Mars not too many years from now. And I hope that our two witnesses, who have significant previous experience in NASA’s human exploration program, will help us better understand the challenges NASA faces in realizing that goal.

NASA has just released its updated “Journey to Mars” report, and I hope that we will invite NASA to come before this Committee to discuss it. As Ms. Edwards has noted, NASA should really be at today’s hearing too.

Getting to Mars will be very challenging. We all know that. And we know that it will take adequate funding if we are to get there efficiently and safely. I have made no secret of my willingness to invest more in NASA—in its human exploration, aeronautics, science, and technology programs. Because it is an investment—not just spending—an investment that will pay long-lasting dividends to this nation.

But it’s not just a question of more money—it’s giving NASA some predictability as to when that money will actually show up. If this Congress is looking for reasons why NASA’s exploration program faces potential delays, we need look no further than ourselves.

Too many times in recent years, NASA has had no idea when it would actually get an appropriation, whether that appropriation would be for more than a few months, or whether they might even have to suspend their work due to a government shutdown. That is no way for America’s premier R&D enterprise and its dedicated workforce to have to operate.

If we are going to ask NASA and its contractors to carry out the extremely challenging job of getting America to Mars, this Congress is going to have to do its job too.

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