

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Ranking Member Donna Edwards  
Subcommittee on Space  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

*“A Review of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Budget for Fiscal Year 2015”*

March 27, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding today’s hearing on “A Review of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Budget for Fiscal Year 2015”. I’d like to welcome back Administrator Bolden and also to congratulate NASA and its contractor workforce on a number of successful launches and milestones achieved over the past year.

I am and always have been passionate about NASA and our space program. Our space program has been a symbol of our greatness as a nation, a means for peaceful collaboration with other nations, a bedrock of our capacity for innovation, and a powerful source of inspiration for student and professional engagement in science and technology.

NASA will continue to be these things and more, but only if we provide it with the stability and resources needed to meet its multimission responsibilities in aeronautics, space science, Earth science, human spaceflight, and human exploration. That is why I’m pleased that the \$18.3 billion dollars proposed for NASA for Fiscal Year 2015, which incorporates the funding being requested as part of the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative, is close to the level specified for Fiscal Year 2015 in the NASA Authorization Act bill that I and full Committee Ranking Member Johnson introduced last July. I support the President’s Growth Initiative to make further investments in research and development that will help grow the nation’s economy and create jobs.

That said, I recognize that there will be much discussion about this Initiative, so we need to understand the impacts to NASA’s programs if the agency is only provided the base level request of \$17.46 billion. For example, I have questions about the reduced funding requested for the Space Launch System and Orion crew vehicle, and the potential impact it will have on the programs’ ability to achieve critical test flights in 2017 and 2021.

I also want to understand the implications of the proposed shutdown of the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA)--a project that was undertaken in partnership with Germany-- and hear about whether there are options that should be explored that might preserve our investment in this facility. I also want to learn more about the proposal to fund studies on a

potential Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST) mission, and the science that such a mission might enable.

I look forward to hearing from the Administrator about increases being requested for the commercial crew program. We need to know what we will be getting for that money, and how NASA will ensure that both astronaut safety and the interests of the taxpayer will be protected.

In addition, I hope to learn today whether the base level request for the ISS, and particularly that for research on the ISS, will be sufficient to ensure that a robust research pipeline is in place to support the proposed extension of ISS operations and utilization through 2024. And I have questions about the proposed changes to NASA's education programs, which have played a critical role in inspiring so many of our nation's youth to seek science and technical degrees and careers.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to take this opportunity to clarify, for the record, that while I paid the NASA Administrator a compliment on his passionate and lucid explanation of the Asteroid Redirect Mission to a group of students recently, I continue to have questions about this potential mission and how it would contribute, relative to other potential missions, to enabling the goal of sending humans to the surface of Mars.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I am hopeful that today's discussion will help inform our continuing work on reauthorizing NASA. I know that we both share the goal of achieving a strong, bipartisan NASA Authorization bill to provide the stability and resources NASA needs if it is to accomplish the inspiring missions we have asked it to carry out.

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