

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

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

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Good morning, and welcome to this morning’s hearing, Administrator Bolden. I look forward to your testimony. You have a very challenging job with a great many responsibilities, and I know that all of us appreciate the service you render to our nation.

As the Chairman has indicated, we are here today to review NASA’s Fiscal Year 2015 budget request. At the outset, I want to say that I am heartened that the President has been willing to commit more than \$18.3 billion to NASA for FY 2015—a 4 % increase over the FY 2014 appropriation. Achieving that level, however, will require Congress to work with the President to achieve targeted spending cuts and increased revenue to provide the necessary offsets and stay within the budget agreement. I hope that my friends across the aisle will agree with me that NASA and its programs are worth a little effort on Congress’s part to identify the needed funds. The ball is now in our court to do so.

That said, I want to use my remaining time to raise a few issues that I hope will be discussed today.

First, I am troubled by the cuts being proposed to NASA’s education activities. These cuts do not appear to be just the result of achieving increased efficiencies through interagency collaborations. They are cuts, pure and simple. That is the wrong message to be sending as we try to engage the next generation in STEM pursuits.

Second, I have to confess I am a bit weary of the annual cycle of the Administration proposing reductions in the funding for the Space Launch System and Orion exploration vehicles. Both of those vehicles are under development and approaching initial testing milestones. This is the point in a healthy vehicle development program that funding should be increasing, not decreasing. I expect that this is an area that Congress will once again have to address.

Third, I am a bit puzzled by the cuts proposed for NASA’s science programs. Those programs provide not only exceptional science, but also important outreach opportunities and the ability to engage our international partners in meaningful collaborations. We are going to need to look closely at what is being proposed in this budget.

Finally, I want to know more about the proposed increases to NASA’s commercial crew program. Those increases are quite significant, especially in the context of NASA’s constrained budgetary environment. While I certainly want to reduce our dependence on Russia for crew

transportation to and from the International Space Station, I am not prepared to provide a blank check to do so.

As you know, Rep. Edwards and I expressed deep concern last fall over NASA's intention to prioritize price over safety in its evaluation of vendor proposals leading to upcoming contract awards for development and certification of commercial crew systems. Unfortunately, NASA chose not to make any changes in its final solicitation before it went out. The agency's action is directly counter to the recommendations of the *Columbia* Accident Investigation Board, and despite Administrator Bolden's undisputed personal commitment to safety, I think that is a very worrisome step for the agency to take. Moreover, NASA is waiving the requirement for certified cost or pricing data as part of that same contract—data that has traditionally been required to protect both the agency and the taxpayer.

Administrator Bolden, NASA still has sufficient time to correct both of these deficiencies before bidders submit their final updates to their proposals later this spring. I urge you to do so, as I would find it difficult to support the funding you are requesting for commercial crew in the absence of such safeguards.

Well, we have a lot to discuss today. I again want to welcome you to today's hearing, Administrator Bolden, and I yield back the balance of my time.