

**COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY**  
U.S. Congressman Jerry Costello

*Securing the Promise of the ISS—Challenges and Opportunities*

**Wednesday, March 28, 2012**

- Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding today’s hearing to review the International Space Station and what NASA is doing to make sure it can be used effectively through at least 2020.
- Some have called the ISS the greatest engineering feat ever. After a dozen years of assembly in space, we now have a fully functioning orbital laboratory and I commend the men and women of NASA and its contractors for making ISS assembly look easy, because it was far from that.
- The ISS Program was awarded the coveted Collier Trophy by the National Aeronautic Association in recognition of its singular achievement in designing, developing, and assembling in space this unique orbiting outpost.
- With all that it took to get the ISS to where it is today, we must ensure it is fully utilized so U.S. taxpayers can see a return on their investment of over \$50 billion.
- Congress stressed the importance of ISS utilization in numerous authorization and appropriations Acts.
- For example, the 2010 NASA Authorization Act directed NASA to *“take steps to maximize the productivity and use of the ISS with respect to scientific and technological research and development, advancement of space exploration, and international collaboration”*.

- Before we can make concrete plans for sending humans to explore far way places like Mars, we need to better understand how to deal with such unknowns as radiation and bone loss and how human beings react to being in a closed environment in space for months, even years, at a time.
- The ISS is a unique platform that will help us do the research necessary to gain such understanding.
- Furthermore, the ISS will provide other federal agencies and industry with unparalleled microgravity facilities to do research on their own, and in September 2011, NASA awarded a cooperative agreement to an independent, non-profit entity to expand such non-NASA research as part of the U.S. National Laboratory.
- That organization, however, is off to a rocky start, given the abrupt resignation of its Executive Director.
- With the clock ticking on getting the ISS to a full and productive state, I hope to understand how NASA will ensure that this independent entity will enhance and augment ISS research, as directed in the 2010 Authorization Act.
- I want to welcome this distinguished panel of experts and hope their insights can help shed further light on how we can better position the ISS to enable it to reach its full potential, including the possibility of it contributing to medical or other breakthroughs to make life better here on Earth.
- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.