

OPENING STATEMENT
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Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Space
*“NASA’s Cost and Schedule Overruns:
Acquisitions and Program Management Challenges”*
June 14, 2018

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing on *“NASA’s Cost and Schedule Overruns: Acquisitions and Program Management Challenges.”* I’d like to welcome our witnesses, and I look forward to your testimony. This morning, we are going get a status update on NASA’s management of its programs, particularly cost and schedule status on its large missions. To that end, I hope the hearing will provide answers to some key questions. Is NASA’s ability to manage cost and schedule on its programs improving, or is it getting worse as the Government Accountability Office seems to indicate in its recent report on NASA’s major projects? If it is getting worse, what should be done, particularly by this Committee?

Cost and schedule can be expected to be difficult on projects that push the state-of-the-art in science and engineering. Challenging missions and transformational science are what we expect of a space program worthy of a great nation. That said, Mr. Chairman, we can do better. In particular, we need to improve our ability to identify early on--when we can still make design decisions--whether a project runs the risk of exceeding budget constraints and, if so, what options we have at our disposal to make sure the program meets those budget constraints.

The Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST) is a good example. After stakeholders, including the National Academies, expressed concerns that WFIRST could run into potential cost and schedule growth, NASA established expert groups to rigorously review the cost, engineering, and science objectives for the mission. I commend NASA for taking this action. These steps are being taken before a final WFIRST mission design is established and while there is still time to reconsider the scope and approach for the mission to preclude the possibility of exceeding cost and schedule expectations as it starts development.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to discussing learning opportunities such as this one and determining whether future NASA missions would benefit from incorporating similar processes to minimize the possibility of future schedule delay and/or cost increases. One thing I learned early on while serving on this Committee is that NASA is a unique engine of innovation, a force for pushing new advances in space technology and operations. That is why I am anxious to hear from our witnesses on whether cost and schedule models that were based on past, traditional approaches to NASA’s project development are being updated to reflect the changes in today’s manufacturing, operations, and technology environment. Is R&D on cost and schedule models needed? Are there other tools that could help NASA improve the management of cost and schedule in its acquisition of space systems?

Well, we have a lot to discuss this morning, and I look forward to a good discussion at today's hearing.

Thank you and I yield back.