

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Ami Bera (D-CA)
of the Subcommittee on Space

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Space

*“An Overview of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Budget for Fiscal Year
2018”*

June 8, 2017

Good morning. Welcome Acting Administrator Lightfoot and thank you for your dedicated service to NASA over many years.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget proposal for NASA is about \$19.1 billion, a nearly 3% reduction from the FY 2017 enacted appropriation.

Mr. Chairman, I recognize these are difficult times, and in the context of the overall proposed federal budget, \$19 billion can be seen as a recognition of the important role NASA plays. However, when looking below the surface of this budget request, some of the details give me pause.

While the request proposes \$5.7 billion for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate, it does so while terminating five Earth science missions. I am concerned about what this cut says about our stewardship of Earth and the legacy we want to leave behind for our children and grandchildren.

Speaking of children, Mr. Chairman, the FY 2018 proposal seems to forget the next generation. NASA has served as a catalyst for inspiring our Nation’s youth to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math education and careers. However, this budget request would eliminate NASA’s Office of Education and funding for cornerstone programs such as Space Grant, the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), and the Minority University Research and Education Project (MUREP).

We need the next generation to be energized and prepared for the exciting goals we are asking NASA to achieve, including sending humans to Mars. Unfortunately, a 9% cut to NASA’s exploration programs—including the key systems that will enable the United States to return to deep space—does not help get us closer to Mars or build on the inspiration and curiosity of the next generation. Nor does it mirror Congress’ intent when it provided an increase of nearly \$400 million to NASA for FY 2017 over the FY 2016 enacted level. Or when it passed the NASA Transition Authorization Act to provide stability for NASA programs.

Mr. Chairman, this body and the Administration need to be on the same page to enable the

“constancy of purpose” that NASA needs to meet the challenging tasks the Nation has given it. Unfortunately, the budget proposed for Fiscal Year 2018 will set NASA back. By flat-funding NASA in the out years, NASA’s purchasing power would actually shrink by a total of about \$4.5 billion over the 5-year budget horizon.

It’s up to us on this Committee and in this body to provide the resources NASA needs to stay on the cutting-edge of discovery in science, aeronautics, space technology, and human exploration.

NASA remains a critical national asset. For nearly 60 years, it has been a source of technological and scientific innovation, an inspiration to generations of Americans, and a driver for economic growth. Let us do what is necessary to keep NASA’s future bright.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I yield back.