

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

2321 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301

(202) 225-6371  
<http://science.house.gov>

September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy  
Acting Administrator  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
300 Hidden Figures Way, SW  
Washington, D.C., 20546

Dear Acting Administrator Duffy,

NASA is the world's premier civil space agency. Its mission is clear and was defined by law at the very beginning of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, the original law by which NASA was created:

“The Congress hereby declares that it is the policy of the United States that activities in space should be devoted to peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind.

The Congress declares that the general welfare and security of the United States require that adequate provision be made for aeronautical and space activities. The Congress further declares that such activities shall be the responsibility of, and shall be directed by, a civilian agency exercising control over aeronautical and space activities sponsored by the United States...”<sup>1</sup>

NASA is empowered by Congress to exercise civilian leadership over America's space program for the peaceful purposes of research and exploration. The agency's long and storied history in pursuit of these endeavors is a triumphant one that has inspired generations of Americans – and people all around the world – to dream of the stars and imagine the impossible. As a result, NASA consistently ranks among the most popular agencies in the federal government here at home<sup>2</sup> while serving as an immeasurable source of American soft power abroad.<sup>3</sup> The intangible

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nasa.gov/history/national-aeronautics-and-space-act-of-1958-unamended/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/08/12/americans-see-many-federal-agencies-favorably-but-republicans-grow-more-critical-of-justice-department/>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/11/11/meet-washingtons-shadow-diplomat-secret-its-nasa-00125298>.

qualities that make NASA a beacon of hope for the world are difficult to define, but they are a precious national asset all the same. Nothing should ever be allowed to jeopardize them.

As the Ranking Member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, I have observed the Trump Administration's attitude towards NASA with great alarm over the past eight months. As codified in law, NASA is a multi-mission agency pursuing a balanced and robust set of core missions in science, aeronautics, human spaceflight, and exploration. It is clear this administration does not value science and does not prioritize NASA's indispensable scientific role. It is clear this administration does not understand what makes NASA unique and the importance of protecting it from politicization. It is equally clear what this administration does prioritize and what values it holds.

It is my understanding that NASA's relationship with the Department of Defense (DoD) continues to evolve. I have serious concerns about NASA's developing relationship with the U.S. Air Force that will need to be addressed. NASA must remain focused on its mission as a civil space agency and a scientific agency. It cannot permit unrelated priorities to distract it from its mission or impair its ability to achieve its ambitious objectives in space for the benefit of humanity here on Earth. Just as importantly, it must avoid taking any action that could undermine the inimitable place NASA holds in the public imagination. I will not hesitate to make these points as I conduct oversight on this issue in the weeks and months to come. In the meantime, I request that NASA immediately inform the Committee should it take any actions that will impact its ability to carry out its mission due to its relationship with DoD.

Pursuant to Rule X of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology "shall review and study on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities relating to nonmilitary research and development."<sup>4</sup> The Committee possesses jurisdiction over the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as "astronautical research and development, including resources, personnel, equipment, and facilities" and "outer space, including exploration and control thereof."<sup>5</sup>

For any questions regarding this letter, please contact Josh Schneider with the Committee's Minority staff at (202) 225-6375. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

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<sup>4</sup> [119 First Session House Rules](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

CC: Chairman Brian Babin  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology