

OPENING STATEMENT
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of the Subcommittee on Space

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
“*NASA: Past, Present, and Future*”
February 16, 2017

Good morning. And welcome to our distinguished panel.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for calling this hearing. I also want to thank my Democratic colleagues for choosing me to serve as the Ranking Member for the Subcommittee on Space this Congress.

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 catalyst for economic growth.

It is also a symbol of American excellence and a demonstration of our commitment to international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The International Space Station is a shining example of when countries can come together to achieve great things.

An issue I am passionate about is finding ways to resolve water shortages that impact the livelihood of many Sacramento County families, farmers, and small businesses that I represent in the 7th District of California. That is why I was heartened to read, in Dr. Stofan’s prepared statement, of the positive impact made by NASA satellites in providing critical information such as soil moisture and groundwater depletion. Her description of a NASA-developed system that processes satellite data to track field-by-field water use, currently utilized by fifteen states including California to help water managers balance their water resources, is a clear reminder that NASA’s contributions also benefit people here on Earth.

It is fitting that this hearing will provide an opportunity to remind us of just how much NASA has accomplished in the past six decades, and hopefully, it will also provide additional motivation for my colleagues to support NASA in achieving greater things in the decades ahead. The landing on the Moon by Neil Armstrong, images of distant galaxies by the Hubble Space Telescope, construction of the Space Shuttle in my home state of California, and rover exploration of the Red Planet—all these amazing feats are well known to generations of young Americans.

The future of NASA looks just as bright. Soon, the OSIRIS-Rex spacecraft will reach the asteroid Bennu and attempt to return a sample back to Earth for analysis; the Space Launch System and Orion will fly as an integrated system, an important step as our astronauts prepare once again to explore beyond low Earth orbit; the James Webb Space Telescope will use infrared

light to examine every phase of cosmic history; and the Surface Water Ocean Topography mission will monitor water level changes in our rivers and reservoirs, improving our weather and climate models in addition to forecasting flood and drought situations.

For NASA to do these great things, including preparation for landing humans on Mars, it is critical that Congress continue to invest in NASA and provide it with the long-term stability it needs and deserves.

I hope today's hearing will emphasize that message.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I yield back.