

OPENING STATEMENT
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House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Space
“Next Steps to Mars: Deep Space Habitats”
May 18, 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding today’s hearing on *“Next Steps to Mars: Deep Space Habitats”*. I have long been a strong supporter of NASA, including NASA’s human spaceflight program. Having a bold and inspiring goal to send humans beyond low-Earth orbit, as we did with Apollo, inspired a generation of scientists and engineers and led to countless technological advances and benefits to our nation.

A few years ago, the National Academies issued a Congressionally-mandated report citing the importance of Mars as the horizon goal for human space exploration. Other advisory bodies and reports have reached similar conclusions. And, the House has passed policy provisions on the goal of sending humans to Mars.

Discussions within this Subcommittee and the full Committee have focused on strategies for how to get there. Now it is time to do the hard work that must be accomplished if we are to make measurable progress toward sending humans to Mars.

Today, we will hear about the initial work on one critical element needed for a human mission to Mars—namely, habitats.

There are many other critical capabilities needed, as well, before we can send humans to explore Mars. Advances in propulsion, the ability to land large payloads on Mars, and development of a Mars ascent vehicle that can safely return crew from the surface of Mars back to Earth are just a few of the technological challenges that I hope the Subcommittee will explore in future hearings.

I’d like to thank our very distinguished panel for being here and I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, and I yield back.