



April 29, 2015

Representative Steven Palazzo
Chair, Subcommittee on Space – Science, Space,
& Technology Committee
331 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Donna Edwards
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Space –Science,
Space, & Technology Committee
2445 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Palazzo and Ranking Member Edwards,

I write today on behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, regarding the *National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act for 2016 and 2017*.

The AAAS is committed to the principle that broad-based, steady and sustained real growth in federal funding for research and development is crucial to strengthening America's innovation ecosystem and economic competitiveness. It is in light of this commitment that we express concerns about the authorized funding levels for scientific research in this bill.

We appreciate that the bill would authorize increased overall funding for the agency under the “aspirational” scenario, especially during these difficult fiscal times. But we are deeply concerned that even in this scenario overall funding for NASA's Science Mission Directorate would decrease due to deep cuts to the Earth Science Division. Like all of the science divisions at NASA, the Earth Science Division is guided by a decadal survey formulated by a panel of scientific experts through the National Research Council (NRC). Federal investment is critical to realizing the panel's scientific vision for progress and discovery in Earth Science.

From its very foundation in 1958, NASA has been charged with conducting activities that contribute to “(t)he expansion of human knowledge of the Earth and of phenomena in the atmosphere and space,” among its other goals. Today, NASA's Earth Science missions contribute critically to this challenge, informing our understanding of natural disasters, like the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the impact of clouds and aerosols on our changing climate, and weather patterns that affect us all each and every day.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) plays a unique and important role in America's innovation ecosystem, providing the lion's share of funding for non-defense-related activities in space—from robotic research on our universe to human exploration and experimentation in low-earth orbit and beyond. Robust and sustained federal support for NASA's multi-faceted mission is crucial to maintaining longstanding American pre-eminence in the space sciences and exploration.

We stand ready to work with you to build on past commitments to reauthorizing NASA in a bipartisan manner and in support of the progress of science.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Fink
Chair, AAAS Board of Directors
Herman and Margaret Sokol Professor
Whitehead Institute/Massachusetts Institute of Technology

CC: The Honorable Lamar Smith, Chairman, House Science, Space, and Technology Committee
The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ranking Member, House Science, Space, and Technology
Committee
The Honorable Frank D. Lucas
The Honorable Jim Sensenbrenner
The Honorable Dana Rohrabacher
The Honorable Randy Neugebauer
The Honorable Michael T. McCaul
The Honorable Mo Brooks
The Honorable Randy M. Hultgren
The Honorable Bill Posey
The Honorable Thomas H. Massie
The Honorable Jim F. Bridenstine
The Honorable Randy Weber
The Honorable Bill Johnson
The Honorable John Moolenaar
The Honorable Steve Knight
The Honorable Brian Babin
The Honorable Bruce Westerman
The Honorable Barbara J. Comstock
The Honorable Dan Newhouse
The Honorable Gary Palmer
The Honorable Barry D. Loudermilk
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
The Honorable Daniel Lipinski
The Honorable Suzanne M. Bonamici
The Honorable Eric M. Swalwell
The Honorable Alan M. Grayson
The Honorable Ami Bera
The Honorable Elizabeth H. Esty
The Honorable Marc A. Veasey
The Honorable Katherine M. Clark
The Honorable Don Beyer
The Honorable Ed G. Perlmutter
The Honorable Paul D. Tonko
The Honorable Bill Foster