



# COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS

## CHAIRWOMAN BARBARA A. MIKULSKI

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### **CHAIRWOMAN MIKULSKI HOLDS NASA FISCAL YEAR 2015 OVERSIGHT AND BUDGET HEARING**

*Says Administrator must Spend Efficiently, Plan for Space Travel and Adjust to Turmoil in Russia*

**WASHINGTON**—U.S. Senator **Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.)**, Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired a Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Subcommittee hearing to review the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015.

*Senator Mikulski's statement, as prepared for delivery, follows:*

“We are here today to review the 2015 budget request for NASA, an agency that all of us care deeply about. We have just one witness here today: NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, who will testify about NASA’s budget priorities. NASA Inspector General Paul Martin has also provided written testimony regarding NASA’s top management challenges.

“This hearing is part of the Senate Appropriation Committee’s mission to hold more than 60 hearings in a span of six weeks. We are working diligently and intend to have all our appropriations work done by October 1. If successful, it will be the first time that has been accomplished since 1996, and it is an important part of our return to regular order.

“Let me start by saying that I am unhappy with NASA’s budget. I worry about what it means for the Goddard Space Flight Center, for space science, for Earth science and for NASA’s balanced space program.

“The President’s budget request for NASA this year is \$17.5 billion, which is actually \$186 million below the FY 2014 level of \$17.7 billion.

“What I want to hear from Administrator Bolden is an explanation on how a cut like this impacts NASA’s ability to carry out its mission. Frankly, my colleagues and I do not agree with how NASA’s proposed budget balances these cuts.

“The budget before us proposes to cut science funding by \$179 million - or three percent - below FY 2014. The Space Launch System and Orion are cut by \$365 million - or 13 percent - below 2014.

“NASA needs this funding to support a balanced space program that funds human space flight, reliable and affordable transportation systems and space science. I want to see NASA continue its Space Station operations.

“It is also important to me that the agency support reliable and affordable transportation systems, such as a 2014 test launch for Orion, a 2017 launch for SLS and robust funding for a commercial crew to get to the International Space Station lab facilities without relying on the Russians.

“Finally, I want a space program that keeps NASA’s near term science launches on schedule and on-going missions on track. I am very concerned that the 2015 budget does not invest adequately in future science missions.

“For example, the proposed FY 2015 budget reduces Earth science by \$56 million, cuts astrophysics by \$61 million, inadequately funds a future Dark energy mission and cuts the on-going Hubble mission by 23 percent. That’s too much, too soon. We must keep making progress on the scientific missions recommended by National Academies’ decadal surveys now and in the future.

“I am pleased that NASA is extending the life of the International Space Station through 2020. Thank you. The Space Station is so much more than what everyone saw in the movie ‘Gravity.’ It is our national lab in space, and I am so proud of the astronauts there.

“As of now, there are six people aboard the ISS - two NASA Astronauts, three Russian Cosmonauts and one Japanese Astronaut. They all arrived there on the Russian Soyuz. That’s because when the Space Shuttle retired in July 2011, the United States lost its capability to fly astronauts into space. The ongoing events in Ukraine have me worried about the uncertainty created by that reliance on Russia. Is NASA doing all it can to quickly taper our space program’s reliance on Russia?

“The Members of this Committee have a space coalition that supports NASA’s balanced missions. But to keep that support during frugal times, we need to be able to count on NASA to focus on improved oversight and accountability.

“At the request of this Committee, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has been assessing NASA large projects since 2009. GAO’s most recent assessment shows that NASA’s cost and schedule performance is improving and that cost growth and schedule slips continue to decrease. That’s good.

“The average cost overrun is down from four percent to three percent, while average launch delays are down from four months to under three months. And I’m especially grateful for NASA’s efforts to keep the James Webb Space Telescope on schedule and on budget.

“Many challenges remain. NASA needs to remain vigilant. More than 80 percent of the agency’s funding is awarded by contract – that’s more than \$14 billion of their 2015 request.

“Their Inspector General has identified ongoing agency challenges, ranging from project and contract management to cybersecurity. We appreciate Inspector General Martin’s written testimony on how NASA has implemented his recommendations.

“I want to wrap up by thanking the men and women of NASA. From the machinists grinding precision parts for spacecraft exploring the galaxy, to computer operators compiling data used for forecasting or understanding the Big Bang – they all do great work.

“NASA is where scientists are rewriting textbooks and winning Nobel prizes. But it’s also where astronauts risk their lives to make discoveries in space. Their work is vital for understanding the boundaries of our universe, expanding the boundaries of science and keeping our tech economy moving forward.

“We need to make sure NASA’s budget is adequate to meet that mission.”

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