

**Statement of
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before the
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate**

FY 2008 Budget Hearing

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Chairman Mikulski, Senator Shelby, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss NASA's \$17.3 billion FY 2008 budget request.

I am here today to seek your support for NASA's budget request for FY 2008. This FY08 request, 3.1% higher than that for FY07, demonstrates the President's commitment to maintaining our Nation's leadership role in space exploration, scientific discovery, and aeronautics research. But it supports many diverse priorities in these disciplines, and so we need to allocate our scarce resources carefully. In this, we are guided by the NASA Authorization Act, our annual appropriations legislation, Presidential policy, and the decadal surveys of the National Academy of Sciences. But even so, we cannot afford everything our many constituencies would like us to do.

You will not find major strategic changes in the FY 2008 budget request as compared to last year, but you will see some slight course corrections. Overall, I believe that we are heading in the right direction, that we have made great strides this past year, and that we are on track and making progress in carrying out the tasks before us.

We have aligned NASA's Aeronautics program with the first-ever Presidential policy on aeronautics R&D. The goal of this policy is to ensure that NASA and other agencies advance U.S. technological leadership in aeronautics.

NASA currently operates an armada of over 50 Earth and space science satellites and payloads in orbit today around our Earth, the Sun, and other planets in the solar system. Our FY 2008 budget request provides the resources to launch ten new science missions in that year, most of which involve international partners and other U.S. Government agencies. NASA's \$5.5 billion portfolio of Earth and space science accounts for almost 32% of the budget. This is the result of consistent and substantial growth over several decades. During the 1960s, science was 17% of the NASA portfolio; by the early 1990s, it the figure had grown to 24%. In contrast, human spaceflight in NASA's first decade was 63% of the portfolio, and is 62% of the budget in the President's FY08 request. Science is doing very well indeed at NASA.

Now, our greatest challenge over the next several years is flying the Space Shuttle safely while using it to assemble the International Space Station, and to conduct one last Hubble servicing mission. We will then retire the Shuttle in 2010, and bring new human spaceflight systems, the *Orion* Crew Exploration Vehicle and *Ares I* launch vehicle, on-line as soon as possible thereafter.

With that in mind, let me now turn to the impacts of the FY 2007 appropriation, enacted last month. I certainly know that budget reductions are a fact of life in public service, and we accept the will of the Congress in regard to magnitude and direction of the reduction from the President's FY07 request for NASA. At the same time, I must inform you as to their impact upon our projects and programs, so let me be clear. The FY 2007 continuing resolution reduced NASA's overall funding by \$545 million from the President's request for FY 2007. It specifically targeted NASA's human spaceflight programs with a reduction of \$677 M, of which \$577 M was taken from the Exploration Systems Mission Directorate. Based on our best estimates today, this will impose a six-month delay in our ability to the *Orion* CEV and *Ares I* launch vehicle. Based on everything I know at this time, due to the cumulative effect of reductions in Exploration Systems to pay for Space Shuttle Return to Flight, previously underestimated costs to fly the Space Shuttle until 2010 and complete the International Space Station, and the reduction from the FY 2007 request reflected in the Continuing Resolution

for Exploration Systems, I cannot promise an earlier date for the initial operations of the Orion than March 2015. We will strive to achieve earlier schedule milestones. However, this is where we stand today. For this reason, I ask for your support in fully funding NASA's FY 2008 Exploration Systems budget request to ensure that the gap in U.S. human spaceflight capabilities after Shuttle retirement does not grow longer.

Less funding than planned for 2007 means that less will be obligated on the *Orion* contract, slowing the pace of development planned for 2008-10. To the extent that schedules are allowed to slip further into the future for bringing these new Exploration systems on-line, already difficult challenges in transitioning the highly-skilled, highly-specialized workforce from the Space Shuttle to our new systems will be exacerbated. While I am not worried about the workforce impacts for the current year, I am concerned about the transition from the Space Shuttle to these new systems after the Shuttle is retired in 2010. Thus, we must carefully choose our priorities as to how we spend our time, money, and energy. We must distinguish between "need to have" and "nice to have".

Human spaceflight is a strategic capability for our Nation. We are now facing an approximate 4.5 year gap following Space Shuttle retirement when the United States will not have its own human spaceflight capability. Some in the Earth and space science community have called for further delays in NASA's

human spaceflight efforts to pay for more science missions. I do not agree, and in fact I often wonder what the community of scientists would say if they, and not the human spaceflight community, were facing such a desert of opportunity? If *Orion* is further delayed, we will be viewed by many as ceding our nation's leadership in human spaceflight at a time when Russia and China have such capabilities, and India is developing them.

It has been almost 35 years since man last set foot on the moon. Today, some young people cynically question whether we ever really achieved the goal of which President John F. Kennedy so eloquently spoke. I have reached the point where I firmly believe that if NASA were to disappear tomorrow, if we never put another human into space, or never launched another Hubble Space Telescope, never sent another spacecraft to another planet, that most Americans would be profoundly distraught. We would feel less than ourselves, that our best days as a Nation are behind us, that the future would be dimmer than the past, that we had let something important to our Nation simply slip away. I think that we – as Americans – would feel that we had abandoned the accomplishment of great things, the hard things that President Kennedy spoke of so eloquently.

In 1963, President Kennedy visited Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama and posed the following question: “I know there are lots of people now who say, ‘Why go any further in space?’ When Columbus was halfway through his

voyage, the same people said, ‘Why go on any further? What will we possibly find? What good will it be?’ And they want to stop now. I believe the United States of America is committed...to be first in space. And the only way we are going to be first in space is to work as hard as we can here and all across the country.”

Thus, when you consider NASA’s FY 2008 funding request, I ask you to consider our Nation’s interests above the interests of any individual project, program, or constituency. The United States is a recognized leader because successive Presidents and Congresses worked together in the past to make the right strategic decisions for our Nation’s future in space, but this leadership is something we cannot take for granted. I believe that our budget request before you today provides a carefully-considered, balanced set of programs for our nation’s civil space effort with world-class Earth and space science, strategic capabilities in human spaceflight, and U.S. technological leadership in aeronautics. We need the help of the Congress to provide the resources necessary to maintain that leadership.

Thank you.