

## **NASA Advisory Council Recommendation**

### **Recovering the Planetary Exploration Program 2013-01-03 (SC-01)**

#### **Recommendation:**

The Council recommends that in formulating its FY 2015 budget proposal, NASA seek restoration of the Planetary Science budget to a level consistent with Congressional action on the FY 2013 budget.

#### **Major Reasons for Proposing the Recommendation:**

The cuts to NASA's Planetary Science program in the Administration's proposed FY 2013 and FY 2014 budgets are disproportionately large, and Congressional action restored \$223M of the \$309M cut proposed in FY 2013. The intent of Congressional action has not been included in formulating the FY 2014 budget, and the Planetary Science Division budget again faces a large \$284M cut relative to FY 2012.

#### **Consequences of No Action on the Proposed Recommendation:**

The funds restored by Congress in the passed FY 2013 budget allowed continuation of the Outer Planets program, including studies of a Europa mission, continuation of the Division's fleet of missions currently in operation, and maintenance of the launch rate of small- and medium-class missions. The proposed FY 2014 funding profile will result in effective termination of the Outer Planets program, early termination of missions currently in operation, and a serious decline in new mission launches over the decade – threatening NASA's world leadership in planetary exploration.

#### **NASA Response:**

The FY 2014 budget request reflects difficult budget decisions in a very difficult budget environment that are consistent with the Administration's priorities. The FY 2013 budget process concluded very late this year, and the referenced changes in the FY 2013 budget were not signed into law until March 26, 2013, after the FY 2014 budget request had been finalized and nearly six months into FY 2013. The FY 2013 enacted appropriation was also subject to a rescission and a reduction due to sequestration. These changes are reflected in the operations plan that was delivered to Congress in May 2013. NASA will use the approved FY 2013 funding for Planetary Science and the outcome of the FY 2014 appropriations process to inform its future planning with respect to the formulation of the FY 2015 budget request.