

September 17, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chair
Senate CJS Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Senate CJS Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20510

To Chairwoman Collins and Chairman Moran, and Ranking Members Murray and Van Hollen:

We write to thank you for your support of NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD) in the committees' CJS appropriations legislation, and to raise an urgent issue facing NASA during a potential continuing resolution (CR). Due to the discrepancy in funding levels proposed by the White House and likely provided by Congress in FY 2026, **we urge you to include an anomaly within any future CR to ensure the continued operations of NASA projects and missions, pending completion of congressional appropriations.**

The administration's FY 2026 budget proposes a 47% cut to NASA science within a 24% overall agency cut, the deepest single-year reductions ever proposed.¹ More than 40 NASA science projects are singled out for termination, including 19 active missions.² Both House and Senate appropriations committees have rejected the full extent of these cuts, demonstrating clear bicameral intent to maintain SMD and other activities well above the request.

However, recent reporting suggests that the administration may, through restricted apportionments, functionally impose the 47% cut to NASA Science during a continuing resolution.³ Due to the severity of this reduction, this action would result in profound disruptions to dozens of projects, including the termination of active and in development missions—actions that would be difficult, if not impossible, to reverse.

Such outcomes would preempt the role of Congress and disregard clear congressional intent to preserve these unique assets and capabilities. It would also depart from OMB's own longstanding guidance⁴ to avoid making apportionment actions that impinge upon Congress' prerogatives.

We recommend including language to (i) specifically prohibit the use of CR funds to terminate, pause, or otherwise cease nominal operations of active NASA missions and projects; and (ii) to enable apportionment of funds up to the rate necessary to continue standard operations of these projects.

¹ <https://planetary.org/charts/fy2026-crisis-nasa-overall-science-budget-chart-with-proposed-cut>

² <https://www.planetary.org/charts/fy-2026-active-mission-cancellations>

³ "As White House talks about impounding NASA funding, Congress takes the threat seriously", Ars Technica. July 18, 2025.

⁴ As recently as September 2024, [OMB guidance explicitly stated](#) that any spending apportionments during a CR should not "impinge on the final funding prerogatives of Congress".

Your committee has repeatedly demonstrated its support for continued U.S. leadership in space science and exploration, and has recognized its essential role in innovation, competitiveness, and scientific discovery.

We ask that you continue to prioritize these unique national investments, and act decisively to ensure that congressional intent is reflected during any stopgap funding period.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

American Geophysical Union
American Society for Gravitational and Space Research
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Black In Astro
ExploreMars, Inc
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers
The Mars Society
Maryland Aerospace Alliance
National Space Society
The Planetary Society
Scientific Society for Astrobiology
Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (SEDS) USA
TexSpace Collective