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In a hearing hosted by the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Subcommittee on Space, Chairman Brian Babin (R-TX) lead a discussion of the fiscal year 2017 (FY 2017) Presidential Budget Request for NASA. Witness Charles F. Bolden, NASA Administrator, provided testimony in favor of the proposed \$19 billion request.

Rep. Babin blamed the President for doing a disservice to NASA by including mandatory funding in his budget request because this form of appropriations is unlikely to be passed in Congress. Both Rep. Babin and Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-TX) pointed to the NASA FY 2017 budget as a “piggy-bank” for U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), whose Earth science programs benefit from NASA-funded programs. Bolden responded by pointing out that NASA is compensated for providing imaging satellites to both USGS and NOAA, whose programs are critical.

Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD) asked Bolden for concrete examples of how funding for Earth science is benefiting both the American people and the economy. To this, Bolden referenced the Soil Moisture Active Passage (SMAP) and Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) missions, which have benefitted communities by providing information on drought conditions in the U.S.

Other questions raised by Rep. Bill Posey (R-FL) covered the timeline for EM1 and EM2, mission launches to Mars that would take place in 2018 and 2023, respectively, as well as safety and risk concerns. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) also asked about attracting more young people to aeronautics.

Sources: House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA)
