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The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing on the future of NASA on February 16, 2017. Witnesses featured two geologists, former Senator Harrison Schmitt, the only geoscientist to walk on the moon, and Dr. Ellen Stofan, former Chief Scientist of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Tom Young, Former Goddard Space Flight Center Director, and Astronaut Thomas P. Stafford also testified at the hearing.

NASA's earth science activities were emphasized throughout the hearing. Dr. Stofan highlighted some of the many economic benefits of NASA Earth Science, such as the GRACE satellite's groundwater monitoring in California, and a NASA phone application to assist farmers for crop monitoring and irrigation purposes.

The comments of several committee members hint at reprioritizing NASA away from earth sciences. To contrast this proposed reprioritization, Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA-8) asked Dr. Stofan to explain what would be at risk if NASA's earth science budget were eliminated. Chairman Smith (R-TX-21) commented after this statement that "rebalancing" NASA would not eliminate NASA Earth Science, but rather, reprioritize it. Dr. Stofan testified that the earth science budget at NASA has decreased slightly (with inflation) over the past 20 years. Stofan elaborated on how NASA has been vital to other agencies' work, such as the GOES-R weather satellite for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Landsat satellite for the U.S. Geological Survey. During the hearing, Rep. Weber (R-TX-14) suggested that the committee may try to shift NASA away from these collaborations, and shift some of NASA's earth science priorities towards other agencies such as NOAA.

During the hearing Thomas Young stressed the importance of NASA's continued use of the National Academy of Sciences' decadal surveys to set science priorities.

Sources: House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
