

## Markup of the NASA Authorization Act of 2013

On July 18, 2013, the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee held a markup of the NASA Authorization Act of 2013 (H.R. 2687). The full committee markup followed a July 10 markup by the Space Subcommittee. The bill, which reauthorizes programs at NASA for two years with a top line budget of \$16.9 billion, was approved by a vote of 22 to 17 along party lines. The committee considered 36 amendments, of which 11 were accepted.

The bill sets clear human spaceflight goals for NASA, which include sending humans into lunar orbit, to the surface of moon, and to Mars. It provides no funding for the Asteroid Retrieval Mission requested in the President's FY 2014 budget, and it reduces NASA's Earth Science budget to 2008 levels. It prohibits NASA from implementing the President's requested restructuring of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, which would have eliminated most of NASA's involvement in education and outreach. The bill will provide additional funding for the International Space Station (ISS), Space Launch System (SLS), and commercial crew above the \$16.9 billion authorization level if Congress repeals or replaces the Budget Control Act (S. 365).

Ranking Member Donna Edwards (D-MD) introduced an amendment, which amounted to a substitute bill (H.R. 2616) that was defeated along party lines. The substitute bill would have reauthorized NASA for three years, beginning with a funding level of \$18.1 billion in FY 2014 and increasing to a funding level of \$18.9 billion by FY 2016, \$2 billion above the majority bill. It would have established the goal of a human mission to Mars while giving NASA the leeway to develop its own intermediary goals. It would also have increased funding levels for Earth Science, Planetary Science, and other NASA programs above those in the original bill. Funding levels similar to those in Edwards's substitute amendment were recently approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

A manager's amendment was passed, which, among other things, requires continuation of the NASA Space Grant College and Fellowship Program, requires the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to complete a report on near-Earth objects, and requires justification of the President's proposed Asteroid Retrieval Mission.

An amendment introduced by Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) struck a provision in the bill that would have set a new six-year term for the NASA administrator. The goal of the provision was to give NASA more stability of purpose, but Johnson argued that it is important for the administrator to have the strong presidential support that comes with being an appointee. Johnson's amendment was accepted by a vote of 20 to 19.

Some of the amendments accepted by unanimous consent dealt with international partnerships and education. An amendment introduced by Joseph Kennedy (D-MA) directs the President to invite international partners to participate in a U.S.-led initiative to send humans to Mars. An amendment introduced by Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) and Elizabeth Esty (D-CT) encourages NASA to continue informal science education in partnership with museums, science centers, and planetariums. A second amendment introduced by Kennedy requires an independent review of the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program and would incorporate K-12 education, community colleges, and two-year institutions into the program.

Amendments that would have increased funding for science and outreach to minority groups were not accepted but prompted an interest in further dialogue. Alan Grayson's (D-FL) amendment would have increased funding for science if the sequester was repealed, and Frederica Wilson's (D-FL) amendment would have ensured that NASA's education and outreach included groups that have historically been underrepresented in STEM fields. Chairman Smith expressed an interest in working with both representatives to accomplish their goals in the final legislation.

Other amendments that were not accepted dealt with program funding, human spaceflight, and education. Rejected amendments would have increased funding levels for earth science, education, heliophysics, space technology, the SLS, cross-agency support, the inspector general, and environmental compliance and restoration. An amendment introduced by Johnson would have provided the NASA administrator with greater flexibility to shift program funding. Amendments introduced by Edwards and Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) would have required the National Academy of Sciences to review how the bill's cuts in earth science funding would affect climate research and weather forecasting, respectively.

Edwards also introduced amendments that would have struck the bill's provision making "exploration deeper into the solar system" NASA's main focus and the provision requiring a sustained presence on the moon. She argued for maintaining NASA's current multi-mission focus and for letting NASA determine the best milestones on the path to Mars. Kennedy introduced an amendment that would have struck language in the bill eliminating NASA's ability to consolidate its STEM education programs. Although representatives on both sides of the aisle expressed skepticism about the Administration's STEM education plan, Kennedy and Edwards argued that NASA needs the flexibility to pursue its own reorganization of its education and outreach efforts if it sees fit.

None of these amendments were accepted.

Opening statements and a list of amendments considered, as well as a video archive of the entire 5-hour markup, are available from the committee website.

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