



The Honorable Lamar Smith  
2409 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
2468 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson,

The Planetary Society is pleased to see the House Science Committee advance H.R. 5503 as amended, and is particularly supportive of its recommendation for a critical funding increase to planetary science while maintaining overall balance in the science mission directorate and NASA writ large.

The Planetary Science Division is in a period of rebuilding, and the \$2.6 billion authorization would be a critical step in maintaining U.S. leadership in space science and exploration in the next decade.

Planetary defense is a high priority for The Planetary Society. Congress has consistently taken the lead on this topic since the 1990s by directing NASA to pursue NEO detection and classification, and this bill continues that legacy. The Society supports the language endorsing NEOCam or a similar space-based near earth object (NEO) detection capability.

The Society is also very pleased to see that Mars remains a top destination for human spaceflight goals, and that NASA will be directed to prioritize human exploration beyond low-Earth orbit. The Society also supports the language that advances the important debate regarding the future of the International Space Station, and how NASA can find ways to reduce costs in order to pursue human exploration beyond Earth.

We commend the committee for working in a bipartisan manner during the markup process to support all of space science and exploration at NASA, and its efforts to forge a consensus path forward for the nation's space program.

Sincerely,

Casey Dreier  
Director of Space Policy  
The Planetary Society

Bill Nye  
Chief Executive Officer

Jennifer Vaughn  
Chief Operating Officer

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