

Congressman Andy Biggs
Arizona's Fifth Congressional District

Dear Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Serrano, and Distinguished Members of the House
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies:

It is a pleasure to address you on Members' Request Day.

Based on a review of major successes in federal scientific investment earned by my constituents at Arizona State University (ASU), I write to request full support for NASA's Discovery Program, which entails funding at a level of at least \$272.69 million. Additionally, I request full support for the Planetary Science portfolio, at a level of at least \$1.85 billion.

As you may know, ASU's Psyche Mission has been granted NASA approval to guide a spacecraft to a metal asteroid. This marks the first time that ASU will lead a deep-space NASA mission and the first time scientists will be able to observe what is believed to be a planetary core.

Psyche, an asteroid orbiting the sun between Mars and Jupiter, is composed almost entirely of nickel-iron metal. The mission's spacecraft is expected to launch in 2023 and to arrive at the asteroid in 2030, where it will spend 20 months in orbit, mapping the body and studying its properties. Psyche is one component of NASA's Discovery Program, which is a series of low-cost, highly-focused robotic missions within our solar system.

To quote ASU President Michael Crow: "The knowledge this mission will create has the potential to guide our thinking about planetary science for generations to come. We are in an exciting era of solar

system exploration, with innovative public-private sector partnerships helping to unlock new worlds of discovery. I am proud that ASU will be at the forefront of this research.”

Given the critical importance of this mission and those like it, I am pleased to request robust support for the Discovery Program. Please find a formal request below.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

Planetary Science Enacted FY16: \$1.631 billion; FY18 Requested: \$1.85 billion

Discovery Program 2015 Operating Plan: \$259.7 million; FY18 Requested: \$272.69 million

Robust support of at least \$272.69 million is requested for NASA’s Discovery Program, funded within the Planetary Science budget. This is a 5% increase over the 2015 Operating Plan of \$259.7 million and very close to the FY18 projection of \$277.3 million. This slight increase is necessary to support minimal but real growth in the program. In order to accommodate this request, the Planetary Science budget must also be fully funded to at least \$1.85 billion. This is the same level proposed by the House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee in FY2017.

Discovery Program missions are relatively low-cost and bring a tremendous return for advanced research. The missions are designed and led by a principal investigator who assembles a team of scientists and engineers to address key science questions about the solar system. NASA has selected two recent Discovery missions that have the potential to open new windows on one of the earliest eras in the history of our solar system. The two latest missions, known as Lucy and Psyche, will launch in 2021 and 2023, respectively.