

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Ami Bera (D-CA)
of the Subcommittee on Space

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
“*James Webb Space Telescope: Program Breach and its Implications*”
July 25, 2018

Good morning, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding these hearings on “*James Webb Space Telescope: Program Breach and its Implications*”. I am pleased to see Administrator Jim Bridenstine make his first appearance before the full Committee. As most know, the Administrator sat on this side of the dais for several years. I look forward to working with him in his new capacity in the months ahead. I also want to thank Mr. Young who will be joining us on both panels today and tomorrow. Mr. Young, thank you for your willingness, time and time again over the years, to chair the many assessments you have been asked to undertake in reviewing space programs in difficulty.

Mr. Chairman, in many respects, these hearings are a continuation of the hearing the Space Subcommittee held just last month on NASA cost and schedule overruns. As we will hear today, JWST has encountered a significant schedule delay. This will translate into a new projected launch date of March 2021 and a program cost increase of about \$1 billion.

In terms of what we should focus on today, I hope that Mr. Young and the Administrator will address:

- How much confidence Congress can have in the March 2021 launch date in light of the IRB’s acknowledgment that some risks are not included in projecting that date;
- How Congress can measure NASA’s progress in implementing the findings and recommendations of the IRB report;
- The impacts of the JWST delay and cost increase, both on the Science Mission Directorate and agency-wide;
- Why issues identified in the 2010 JWST independent review regarding communications and program reporting appear to have been unaddressed; and
- When additional funding will be requested for JWST, and how much will be needed.

It is worth noting that despite the headline-grabbing finding of schedule and cost growth, the IRB concluded that “*JWST should continue based on its extraordinary scientific potential and critical role in maintaining U.S. leadership in astronomy and astrophysics.*” That is why I look forward, over the course of the next two days, to having frank discussions with the people most involved in moving us forward towards commissioning this tremendous observatory.

With that, I yield back.

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Ranking Member Ami Bera (D-CA)
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House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
"James Webb Space Telescope: Program Breach and its Implications"
July 26, 2018

Good morning. Mr. Bush, welcome to Day Two of the Committee's hearings on "*James Webb Space Telescope: Program Breach and its Implications*". Welcome back Mr. Young. We appreciate your flexibility to appear both yesterday and today.

Mr. Chairman, as we will hear today, Northrop Grumman acknowledges that they have contributed to the telescope's delays. They also acknowledge that some of the challenges they have encountered have been the result of human error and procedures. Those errors were avoidable and we need to understand both why they occurred and what NASA and Northrop Grumman are going to do to prevent any more such errors.

As I indicated last month at the Space Subcommittee's hearing on NASA's Cost and Schedule Overruns, we, on this Committee, have the responsibility for making sure that agencies are being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. It is our job to ensure that we understand why programs run into difficulty, verify that necessary improvements are being put in place to put these programs back on the right course, and apply the lessons learned for future missions.

As we heard from Mr. Young yesterday, the JWST Independent Review Board (IRB) focused its energies on maximizing the probability of JWST mission success. It is worth highlighting that the IRB stated that it undertook "*a mission success review, not a failure review.*" Another point worth noting is that the recognition of avoidable human errors that disrupted the integration and testing activities should not detract from the technological "miracles" that NASA and its industry partners had to bring about just to get us to this point. Indeed, while the human errors the IRB identified should not have happened, the American people should be given the context necessary to understand the technical complexity associated with building and testing JWST.

Thus, I hope that Mr. Bush can provide us with details on how Northrop Grumman will move forward and what they are doing to prioritize mission success such that a launch in March 2021 will lead to successful commissioning of this tremendous capability.

With that, I yield back.