



# COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Lamar Smith, Chairman

For Immediate Release  
July 25, 2018

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## Statement by Chairman Brian Babin (R-Texas)

### *James Webb Space Telescope: Program Breach and its Implications*

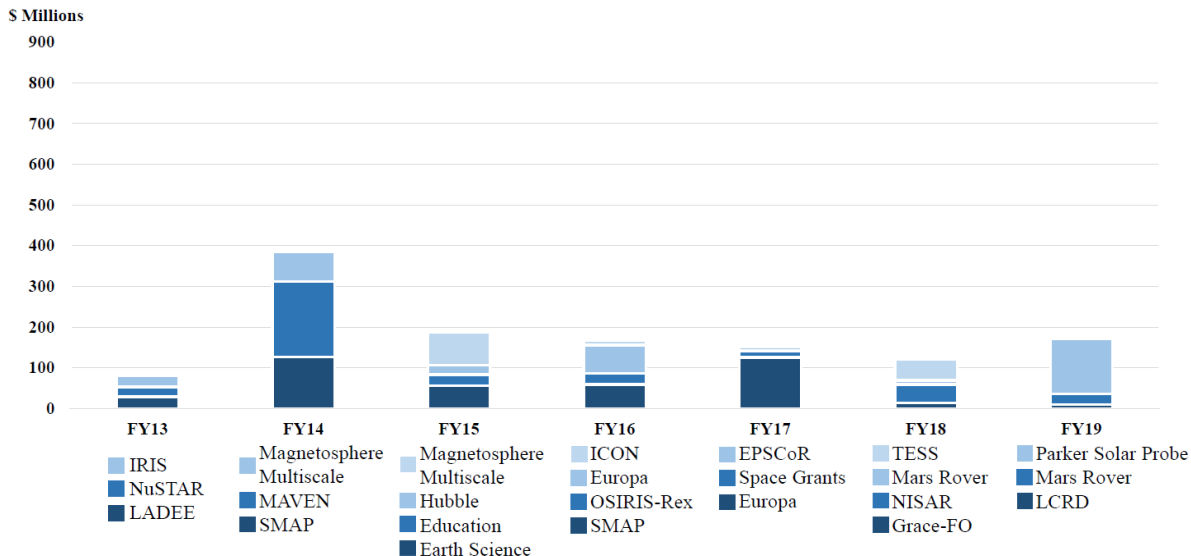
**Chairman Babin:** As the Chairman of the Space Subcommittee and proud representative of Johnson Space Center, I am a tireless advocate for NASA. I strongly believe in the mission of NASA and commend the tremendous dedication of the NASA and industry team.

However, as members of this committee, we have a responsibility to every tax-payer to ensure that government agencies, including NASA, are being good stewards and effectively managing the resources with which they are entrusted.

Today's hearing will focus on the serious issues associated with the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) program breach and its implications, the Independent Review Board's (IRB) analysis and recommendations, and the coming debate over congressional reauthorization of the JWST.

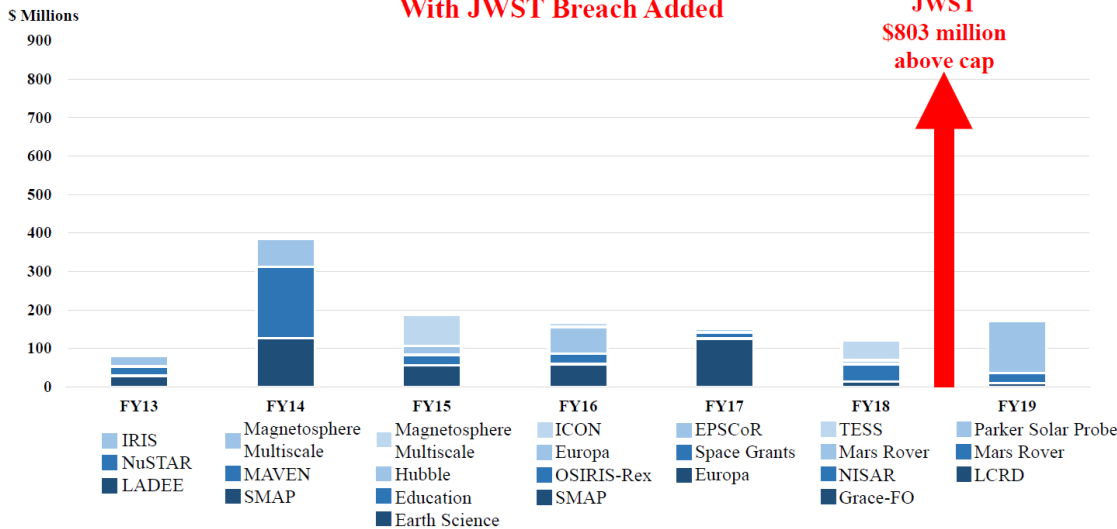
Chairman Smith summarized the IRB's findings and recommendations, so I want to use this opportunity to discuss NASA's lost opportunities due to flagship program cost overruns. As the Space Subcommittee chairman, I focus on the NASA budget in its entirety and every project and program in agency's portfolio, particularly those where budget limitations force difficult decisions on reducing specific project budgets or whether we can fund them at all. Please give your attention to the chart on display.

### NASA's Unfunded Science Requests And Budget Reductions From FY13 to FY19



The committee surveyed NASA's science portfolio over the last few fiscal years to identify project budget reductions and unfunded requests due to limitations. Those projects are listed by fiscal year starting with FY13 and going through projections for FY19.

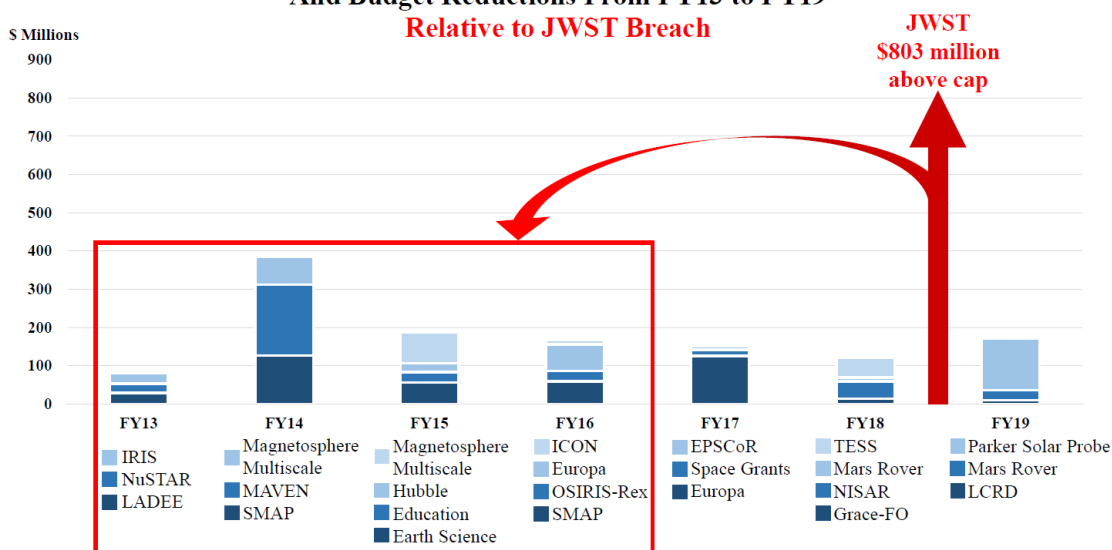
**NASA's Unfunded Science Requests  
And Budget Reductions From FY13 to FY19  
With JWST Breach Added**



With FY18 coming to a close shortly and the IRB's announced JWST cap breach of \$803 million in development costs, this chart reflects the reality of the breach going into FY19 budget planning.

In terms of lost opportunities and NASA's budgetary trade space, it is important to know the full impact the JWST breach caused for NASA and the American public as a whole.

**NASA's Unfunded Science Requests  
And Budget Reductions From FY13 to FY19  
Relative to JWST Breach**

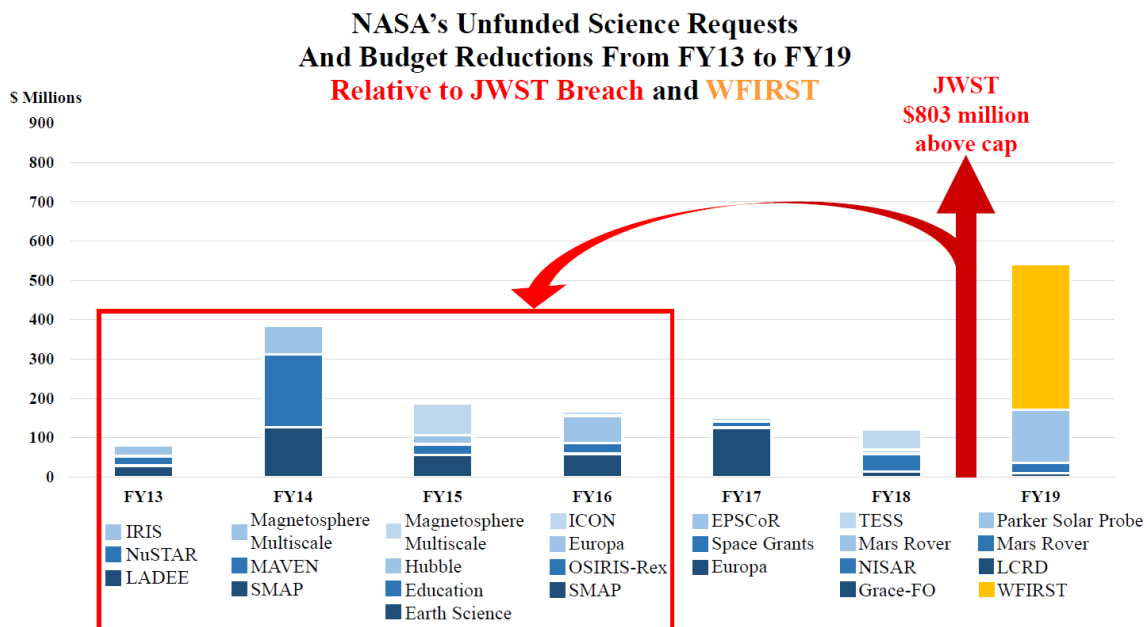


The \$803 million needed to fund the JWST cost breach could fund nearly every one of NASA's science funding shortfalls from FY13 to FY16. These projects include Earth science and education projects greatly promoted by our Democratic colleagues on the committee.

Looking forward to FY19 and NASA's future flagship program plans, the cost issues with the Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (W-FIRST) will become a subject of debate alongside the JWST congressional reauthorization. The FY18 Omnibus required an updated life-cycle cost estimate for W-FIRST and NASA's report concludes the estimated cost range is \$3.3 billion to \$3.9 billion.

This life-cycle cost estimate exceeds the NASA-imposed cost cap of \$3.2 billion included in the bipartisan NASA Authorization Act of 2018.

To give perspective to the funding dilemma presented by the JWST and W-FIRST cost issues, NASA's W-FIRST estimate includes a request for \$371 million which is now reflected on this FY19 chart.



The bipartisan NASA Authorization Act of 2018 seeks to limit flagship program overlap to reduce the NASA's risk of becoming overwhelmed by W-FIRST development before JWST is operational in space. Thus, it is my hope the IRB report and our witness panel testimony will shed light on lessons learned with JWST, leading to a successful flight and operations in March 2021. We DO NOT want these mistakes repeated during the development of W-FIRST. Congress needs to understand the "unvarnished" status of these programs today, as well as the plan going forward. Decisions made now can have long lasting implications on future missions. We need to know that there is not a systematic or fundamental management problem with how NASA plans and executes these larger strategic missions.

I thank our witnesses here today, helping us to better understand where we are and how we plan to move forward, and look forward to your testimony.

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## **Statement by Chairman Brian Babin (R-Texas)**

### *James Webb Space Telescope: Program Breach and its Implications*

**Chairman Babin:** Good morning. Welcome back to our 2nd hearing regarding the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). As I stated yesterday, I strongly believe in the mission of NASA and commend the tremendous dedication of NASA and the industry team. But as the Chairman of the Space Subcommittee which oversees the agency, it is our responsibility to ensure they, as well as every other government agency, are managing their resources effectively.

However, as this Committee learned in yesterday's hearing, the program and resources relative to JWST have not been managed effectively with fault resting not only with the contractor, but also with NASA and Congress.

In his testimony, Tom Young, Chairman of the Independent Review Board (IRB), addressed many of the issues that led to the cost and schedule breaches with JWST. He also shared significant insight on contributing factors such as the contracting mechanisms used and the expertise of the program management and acquisition personnel.

Administrator Bridenstine provided testimony on NASA's response to the IRB and detailed actions being taken to avoid such development failures in the future. He further conveyed NASA's unwavering commitment to "get these problems solved on the ground"...before the system is launched.

For today's panel, the focus shifts to contractor performance and oversight. More specifically, I want to address implications and concerns over the US space industrial base.

The recent presidential space directives have emphasized the renewed importance of space operations to America's national security, scientific advancements, commercial innovation, and aerospace transportation infrastructure. Across all of these lines of effort, the robustness and resiliency of the space industrial base are critical.

Unfortunately, JWST development shortfalls and numerous other cost and schedule issues with multiple civil and national security space programs have given this Committee reason to be concerned with the health of the US space industrial base.

Since a high-visibility civil space mission like JWST is experiencing avoidable human errors in the workplace and embedded problems with engineering processes at a major aerospace firm, then it is important to ask if more widespread technical issues are occurring within national security space missions and other areas of the US space operations community.

The root causes of these issues need to be discussed today, especially if they are related to insufficient availability of highly-skilled employees and reduced STEM education enrollments affecting recruitment. Likewise, Mr. Young mentioned yesterday that the JWST trade space consists of acceptable risk versus available funding. Thus, we need to ask if the space industrial base is trading too much design resiliency to seek more cost efficiency.

Congress needs to understand the status of JWST today, as well as the plan going forward. Decisions made now can have long lasting implications on future missions. We need to know if the problems being experienced are systematic, based in our acquisition approach, or if they are fundamental management problems in how we plan and execute these larger, multi-year development strategic missions.

I gained significant insight from Administrator Bridenstine and Mr. Young's testimony yesterday. I look forward to Mr. Bush's testimony today, to better understand the perspectives from the JWST prime contractor. It is important to understand their view of the challenges, mistakes, current status, and corrective actions as we move forward. Thank you for your appearance today.

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