



## Opening Statement of Chairman Frank Lucas

Full Committee Hearing

*An Overview of the Budget Proposal for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for Fiscal Year 2025*

April 30, 2024

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Today, we hear testimony from Administrator Nelson about the President's budget proposal for NASA for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25).

This Committee plays an important role in NASA's mission by providing policy direction and authorizing activities for the agency.

While we made progress with language included in the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act, it has been more than seven years since the last comprehensive NASA authorization bill was signed into law. I am certain that everyone in this room, including the Administrator, can agree that seven years is far too long.

As many of our experts have highlighted in Committee hearings this year, a lot has changed for NASA since 2017. We must approach an authorization bill with these changes in mind and address a few major topics.

The first topic is Artemis. I speak for Members on both sides of the aisle when I express the strongest support for America's return to the lunar surface. But support also means asking tough questions about the planned architecture and execution of the program.

The second topic is NASA's role in low-Earth orbit when the International Space Station is retired. We heard several perspectives on this topic in February and I look forward to continuing this dialogue as we move forward.

A third major topic is NASA's management of science missions within the agency's portfolio.

We support NASA daring to do big things, particularly in science, but how can Congress ensure these projects, particularly flagship missions, remain on schedule and within budget?

As we deliberate on these topics while we consider this important reauthorization legislation, we must also keep in mind recent budgetary issues.

NASA doesn't lack plans for future exploration efforts, whether it is returning astronauts to the Moon, exploring our solar system, or developing new aviation technology. However, these ambitions come at a price.

In May 2023, President Biden signed the Fiscal Responsibility Act, capping federal discretionary spending for FY24 and FY25.

One of our challenges will be to draft an authorization bill that complies with that law while also providing sufficient support for NASA to execute these awe-inspiring missions.

Failing to do so will force NASA to take on more work than they have funding to accomplish, which will only set NASA up for failure by asking them to do too much with too little.

By providing proper oversight and clear direction in authorizing legislation, this Committee can create the framework for adequate funding for the agency's activities.

A common theme among the hearings this Committee held this Congress is the importance of ensuring U.S. competitiveness in research and technology development globally, and today is no different.

While the U.S. remains the global leader in space exploration, we face increasing challenges internationally.

Just last week, China reiterated its commitment to landing two astronauts on the Lunar surface by 2030. Later this week, China intends to launch a mission that would retrieve samples from the far side of the Moon. If they are successful, China will be the first country to do so.

We cannot allow China to become the frontrunner in space exploration. There are too many consequences for our competitiveness, our national security, and our continued ability to explore space.

With clear direction from Congress, NASA will ensure the U.S. remains a global leader in space and continues to inspire millions of people around the world.

I want to welcome Administrator Nelson back to the Committee, where he served for many years. I look forward to working with you as we move forward with our NASA authorization bill.