

Opening Statement
Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
at the hearing of the
Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics
“NASA’s Aeronautics Mission: Enabling the Transformation of
Aviation”

June 26, 2019, 2:00 p.m.

Thank you, Madame Chair, for holding this hearing on NASA’s aeronautics mission and the activities of the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate.

As most of us in this room know, Aeronautics is the first “A” in NASA. NASA’s very origins grew out of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), which was established nearly 105 years ago to advise the nation during World War I and to advance U.S. aviation in light of Europe’s rapid advancements.

NACA’s foundational research, experiments, flight tests and simulations not only established the U.S. aviation industry, it made possible the nation’s early work in aeronautics and spaceflight.

Today, over 100 years, later the importance of aeronautics to the nation has only grown. As Chairwoman Horn noted in her opening statement, the economic value of both existing commercial air transportation and emerging markets is significant, as are the innovative technologies and new operations on the horizon.

This innovation is happening in my own District in Dallas, which will be one of the cities in which urban air mobility is to be tested.

Yet there are many challenges in realizing opportunities such as urban air mobility. Noise, public acceptance, safety, and the integration of new, and eventually autonomous, systems into the national airspace are just a few. Research is needed to address these challenges, reduce risks, and enable the industry to lead in these emerging areas of civil aviation.

Our investments in NASA's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate have already returned handily in the infusion of NASA aeronautics research into commercial and military aircraft, and in demonstrating tools for more efficient air traffic management that are being transitioned to the FAA for operational use, for example.

While the economic impact of civil and commercial aviation is truly impressive, we can't take for granted the fact that other nations are becoming increasingly capable. The global market is competitive.

Our ability to sustain our leadership and realize future opportunities in civil and commercial aviation require R&D investments and people.

As Chairwoman Horn noted, in Fiscal Year 1994, the Administration's request for aeronautics research would be the equivalent of \$1.76 billion in 2019-year dollars, after accounting for inflation. That's 2 and one half times more than the Fiscal Year 2020 budget request for NASA's research aeronautics activities. And while the comparison may not be exact in the programmatic content included, the contrast is nonetheless very concerning.

If we under-invest in research that supports one of the only industries in the nation that has a positive trade balance, provides

for high-paying, skilled jobs, and has an economic impact for the U.S. economy in the trillions of dollars, we risk losing the very tax base and national revenue that will help us support NASA and the broader R&D activities in our Federal government.

I look forward to working with the Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, NASA, industry, and academia in considering the investments needed to ensure that NASA's aeronautics research, facilities, and workforce are positioned to enable the transformation in aviation that we are discussing today.

Thank you, and I yield back.