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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515-6015

July 10, 2025

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The Honorable Sean Duffy
Acting Administrator
NASA
300 Hidden Figures Way, SW
Washington, DC 20546

Dear Acting Administrator Duffy:

Congratulations on your appointment. As I have previously noted for your predecessor, NASA faces a significant matter of Government transparency and a related issue of legal compliance. Section 1113 of the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Public Law 119-4) requires NASA to submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a spending, expenditure, or operating plan for fiscal year 2025: (1) at the program, project, or activity level, or (2) as applicable, at any greater level of detail required for funds covered by such a plan in the fiscal year 2024 Appropriations Act, in the joint explanatory statement accompanying such Act, or in committee report language incorporated by reference in such joint explanatory statement. Such plan was required to be submitted not later than 45 days after the date of the enactment of Public Law 119-4 (i.e., by April 29, 2025).

Although NASA sent the Appropriations Committees a plan that repeated the appropriations account levels enacted by Congress, it did not provide the greater levels of detail as required by Section 1113 of Public Law 119-4. Therefore, this plan is not compliant with the law.

Nearly four months have now passed since enactment of the Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2025. NASA's failure thus far to comply with the law raises concerns about its intentions with respect to certain missions – particularly those in the Science Mission Directorate for which the President's fiscal year 2026 budget proposal requests cancelation. The absence of a spend plan also appears to be an attempt to avoid the question of whether NASA may seek large-scale reductions in force, beyond the multiple early retirement options provided to employees, as proposed in the budget request.

As you well know, unless and until Congress enacts legislation determining NASA's level of appropriated funds, the agency is not to take any action to impound or defer appropriated funds unless Congress rescinds them by legislation, nor should NASA undertake any transfer, reprogramming, or

reorganization actions outside of the procedures outlined in the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024 and continued by Public Law 119-4.¹

Ordinarily, this reminder would go without saying. However, at an employee “town hall” meeting last week, NASA’s chief of staff was quoted as saying “If we were to wait for all of the congressional process to unfold and get to final resolution to make any movements or do anything, it would probably be considered irresponsible.”² Such a statement is itself irresponsible, and should be clarified immediately.

As you are expected to be the Acting Administrator through at least the end of the fiscal year and well into fiscal year 2026, it is incumbent on you to be forthcoming with Congress about your plans for NASA’s use of taxpayer funds, its workforce, and its organization. It is imperative that you comply with the law by producing a detailed spending plan and briefing the Subcommittee prior to proposing any reorganization of NASA. If you are unwilling to do so, please contact me personally and directly immediately. I look forward to receiving the plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace Meng', written in a cursive style.

Grace Meng
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies

¹ See Division C of P.L. 118-42, NASA Administrative Provisions and section 505.

² https://spacenews.com/nasas-acting-leadership-planning-new-agency-structure/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Petro%20looks%20to%20restructure%20NASA&utm_campaign=FIRST%20UP%202025-06-26