

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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November 10, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Acting Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 Hidden Figures Way, SW
Washington, D.C., 20546

Dear Acting Administrator Duffy,

I write to you about a matter of great urgency. In recent days, my staff has received disturbing reports that NASA is directing the imminent closure of laboratories and facilities hosting mission-critical capabilities at the Greenbelt, Maryland, campus of the Goddard Space Flight Center. These actions put essential hardware and capabilities at great risk. The laboratories and facilities facing closure support many NASA flight missions, and they include laboratories essential to the completion of the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope. The agency's hastily planned moves and closures – some of which I understand are already well underway– risk causing significant delays for multi-billion-dollar missions under development such as Roman and could heighten the risk of mission failure altogether. I intend to request an investigation by the NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG) into all of the agency's actions to carry out the so-called “transformation” of Goddard. But I am concerned in the meantime that the agency is taking actions that could irreversibly degrade critical functions supporting NASA's flight missions, damage or dispose of specialized equipment, and permanently kneecap the agency. I am also deeply troubled that communication to Goddard employees on details of the moves and facility closures appears to be occurring largely verbally rather than in writing, raising the specter of secrecy on the moves. The utter disregard for communication and transparency is also present in NASA's failure to proactively inform the Committee of the goings-on at Goddard. **I am hereby demanding that NASA immediately halt all building, laboratory, facility, and technical capability closure and relocation activities and immediately cease the relocation, disposal, excessing, or repurposing of any specialized equipment or mission-related hardware and systems at Goddard.** In addition, within 7 days, I demand a full accounting of the damage inflicted on Goddard thus far. NASA must stop what it is doing at Goddard and submit to oversight by Congress and the OIG before it inflicts permanent damage on agency scientific capabilities with severe and lasting consequences.

NASA has asserted that the moves and closures leverage its Master Plan for Goddard 2017-2037, a methodically developed “blueprint for Goddard’s future” governed by three priorities – maintaining mission capability; envisioning the Goddard campuses of the future; and meeting affordability goals. The plan involves construction of new buildings, remodeling of existing facilities, and divestiture and demolition of other buildings, among other changes, all to be implemented over a 20-year horizon. Once fully realized, the Plan estimates reducing the Center’s footprint by 25 percent, lowering energy and water use, and increasing affordability and sustainability while strengthening Goddard’s ability to respond to growing and diverse mission and customer requirements.¹ NASA has also asserted that the moves and closures are intended to meet “agency priorities,” which, judging by the Administration’s actions to date, seek to eviscerate NASA science, gut its workforce, and threaten the United States’ leadership in space. I fully recognize the challenges of NASA’s aging infrastructure and the need to modernize and improve the agency’s centers. But that is far from what is happening at Goddard today.

NASA’s sudden rush to shutter roughly half of the main Goddard campus has been publicly reported.² According to an email obtained by Space.com, management at Goddard informed the Center’s employees on September 22nd that the agency planned to “initiate a series of moves... that will reduce our footprint into fewer buildings” and that, “unlike previous large-scale Center reconfigurations, which occurred over a number of years, all planned moves will take place over the next several months and will be completed by March of 2026.”³ I can assure you, as the Ranking Member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, that NASA never disclosed the initiation of a radically different implementation from what was envisioned by the Master Plan to me or my staff before setting it in motion, nor did the agency provide us any rationale for the drastic change of timeline. Nevertheless, over the past month, it appears that Goddard has in fact begun to pack up laboratories, empty out a number of buildings on its Greenbelt campus, and relocate the facilities, in some cases without having even identified the destination of the relocation. In a November 4, 2025, staff-level briefing by NASA legislative affairs and Goddard leadership, Democratic Committee staff were told that these moves are a mere implementation of the Master Plan; as Ranking Member on your agency’s authorizing Committee with oversight jurisdiction of NASA, I reject the explanation that abruptly and haphazardly uprooting employees and millions (at least) of dollars of equipment without a destination or technical justification could reasonably be considered in alignment with any existing “plan.”

The turmoil at Goddard sparked by these sudden actions – chaotic moves, poor communication, employees scrambling to save equipment and research, and most of it occurring during an ongoing government shutdown – is troubling enough and well deserving of the Committee’s oversight. But recent information obtained by Committee staff late last week heightens my concern about the recklessness of the agency’s decisions and the speed at which all of this may be occurring. According to this new information, Goddard management informed staff at the Center last week that additional facilities would need to be emptied out as soon as this Wednesday, November 12th. The facilities include a propulsion laboratory that is mission-critical

¹ https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/gsfcr_master_plan_digest_feb2022_lo_res_website.pdf

² <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/nasa-is-sinking-its-flagship-science-center-during-the-government-shutdown-and-may-be-breaking-the-law-in-the-process>.

³ *Id.*

for the completion of the Roman Space Telescope, one of NASA's flagship scientific missions and a project that is nearly complete. This laboratory and others like it contain highly specialized equipment, including clean rooms that must be maintained with absolute precision to avoid the introduction of contamination into mission-critical systems and carefully calibrated scientific missions. Once dismantled, these facilities cannot be quickly replaced. It is inexplicable and alarming that NASA would contemplate taking actions that could put missions such as Roman at risk without the rigorous planning and commitment to transparency that usually characterize the agency's actions.

If buildings, facilities, and laboratories that are essential to Goddard's work are at risk of being shut down within mere days – without any viable plan to replace them – time is of the essence. As I noted earlier, I intend shortly to request a formal investigation by the NASA OIG into the agency's activities at Goddard to determine whether these activities are complying with agency policies and all relevant laws and regulations, whether they are in alignment with the Master Plan for Goddard, and whether they are damaging Goddard's ability to carry out its scientific and technical responsibilities. In the meantime, however, I cannot ignore the risk of imminent danger to Goddard's scientific and technical capabilities. NASA must halt any and all laboratory, facility, and building closure and relocation activities at Goddard as well as the relocation, disposal, excessing, or repurposing of any specialized equipment or mission-related capabilities, hardware, and systems, and it must do so *now*. Further, NASA must ensure the continuing operation of the laboratories and facilities needed to sustain the ongoing, excepted work occurring at the Goddard campus, especially work on the Roman Space Telescope. The agency must respond to this letter, in writing, **within 24 hours** to confirm that all such activities at Goddard have been put on hold indefinitely. The agency must then prepare to cooperate with the Committee's oversight – and OIG oversight as well – regarding everything that has occurred at Goddard in recent weeks and months.

NASA made a grave error by failing to properly disclose its changing plans for Goddard to the Committee. Even when given the opportunity to explain its plans to Committee staff in a requested briefing, NASA's briefers failed to mention that an accelerated evacuation of additional facilities would occur within just eight days. NASA compounded its error by taking advantage of a government shutdown to rapidly accelerate the timeline for the Goddard moves while broadening their scale and breadth to a degree that risks drastically negative consequences for agency scientific capabilities. This all must end now. NASA needs to stop what it is doing at Goddard, explain itself to Congress, and convincingly justify its actions before it can even think about continuing to move forward.

NASA's Goddard houses vital national assets and a world-class scientific and engineering workforce that have led the development of premier scientific missions, including the James Webb Space Telescope, the Hubble Space Telescope, Landsat, and multiple Earth science probes. Goddard-led fundamental research and applied science have transformed our understanding of the Earth system, the Sun, our solar system, the beginnings and evolution of the universe, and have contributed foundational capabilities that benefit our daily lives. Goddard must be strengthened and improved – not rapidly dismantled – if the United States is to continue to remain the world's preeminent spacefaring nation.

Pursuant to Rule X of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology “shall review and study on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities relating to nonmilitary research and development.”⁴ The Committee possesses jurisdiction over the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as “astronautical research and development, including resources, personnel, equipment, and facilities” and “outer space, including exploration and control thereof.”⁵

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Pamela Whitney or Josh Schneider with the Committee’s Minority staff at (202) 225-6375. Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

CC: Chairman Brian Babin
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Robert Steinau
Senior Official, NASA Office of Inspector General

⁴ [119 First Session House Rules](#).

⁵ *Id.*