



**U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE & TRANSPORTATION**  
*Senator Maria Cantwell, Chair*

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**U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell**

**Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation**

**Hearing: Examining NASA's FY24 Budget and Priorities**

**May 16, 2023**

**Opening Statement**

**[VIDEO](#)**

For more than 100 years, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and its predecessor agency, the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics, have delivered on its commitment to make the United States of America a world leader in aviation and space.

I'm not sure how many people know about the deep connection between NASA and the aviation industry, but there is a saying at the agency: "NASA is with you when you fly."

When many of the aircraft roll off the line in Everett, Washington, they have quieter and cleaner engine technology developed and tested thanks to at least two NASA programs.

So NASA has long been an important partner to the development of the 2 million strong American aviation and defense sector jobs.

When it comes to space exploration, the scientific research, NASA has also been equally powerful.

In 2022 alone, NASA delivered the first images from the James Webb Telescope and demonstrated the Space Launch System and Orion crew vehicle that will send the first woman to the Moon.

The NASA DART mission even proved for the first time that this country could defend itself from a planet killing asteroid.

And every single one of these stories made national news.

Two of them have close ties to the Washington State workforce. Workers in Redmond, Washington, built parts of the propulsion system for both the Space Launch System and the DART mission.

And we also have several scientists who have been assigned research time on the Webb telescope.

But as a Congress we cannot afford to take NASA and its success for granted.

That is why this Committee and the reauthorization of the agency last year was a critical part of the CHIPS and Science Act. This was the first NASA authorization in five years.

Now we might say it's because our colleague [former Senator Bill Nelson] is no longer with us [on the committee], who was a key advocate for always getting NASA authorized.

But we authorized the Artemis program and demanded that NASA establish both accountable leadership and a clear description of each element in the effort, in response to concerns raised in a hearing by the head of the NASA Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel.

We directed the agency to create an independent program analysis, evaluation office, [and] reduce the costs and delays associated with programs,... [in response to concerns raised] by the Government Accountability Office.

And we made it the policy of the United States to maintain world leadership in aeronautics by advancing areas such as advanced materials and manufacturing.

Over the course of this hearing, I look forward to hearing from the Administrator about the progress in these particular areas.

It is my goal to complete another NASA bill this Congress, this time with a multi-year authorization that will help ensure that the nation's leading space and aeronautics research agency has stable, predictable funding that it needs to succeed. It would be the first multi-year NASA authorization in 13 years.

It should be clear to every member of Congress: we cannot operate our science agencies on the cheap, and we shouldn't operate them without clear, multi-year direction.

Stable, growing investments in the technologies of the future—from hypersonic wind tunnels to advanced manufacturing—are the best way to protect our national and economic security.

Giving NASA anything less could jeopardize our leadership in space exploration, slow down our progress on key issues, as faster [fuel-efficient aircraft], increase the

challenges that we faces at our Space Station, and jeopardize commonsense safety actions like building redundant systems to transport astronauts.

Administrator Nelson has been a tireless advocate to protect NASA's budget. So, I look forward to working with him and with Ranking Member Cruz to make sure that NASA and the United States keep their leadership position.