



13 March 2015

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Chair, Senate Space, Science, and Competitiveness Subcommittee  
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz:

On behalf of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and its more than 60,000 Earth and space scientists, I would like to elucidate our position regarding the value of Earth science at NASA.

Earth sciences are a fundamental part of science. They constitute hard sciences that help us understand the world we live in and provide a basis for knowledge and understanding of natural hazards, weather forecasting, air quality, and water availability, among other concerns.

The priorities of NASA's Earth Science Division are based on Decadal Surveys conducted by the National Academy of Sciences' Space Studies Board to determine consensus among scientific experts on the most critical leading-edge scientific areas of research over the next decade. The applicability of these missions cannot be overstated given their impact on your constituents.

Earth science within NASA provides a broad array of benefits and applications across the public and private sectors. In the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NASA's UAVSAR project allowed response teams to track the movement of the oil into coastal waterways and assisted in monitoring the impact and recovery of affected areas along the Gulf of Mexico. MODIS, an instrument on NASA's AQUA satellite, helps monitor dangerous algal blooms that have decimated the economies of coastal communities.

More generally, Earth Science Division missions aid in flood prediction, earthquake response, and severe storm tracking across the Great Plains. Greater knowledge and prediction skill are urgent when we consider the effort, time and costs of protecting infrastructure along coasts, rebuilding fish populations, developing new water resources for manufacturing and agriculture, and restoring communities in the wake of hazards. These observations, and many others like them, are integral and require the vantage point of outer space.

The purpose of AGU is to promote discovery in Earth and space science for the benefit of humanity. Our members are working on research and development for a wide array of Earth and space science topics, and we welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss their work, as well as ways we might be able to assist you. We look forward to working with you; please don't hesitate to reach out to us at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine W. McEntee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end.

Christine W. McEntee  
Executive Director/CEO  
American Geophysical Union