

## **Congress Members Reject NASA Mars & Planetary Cuts**

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A letter opposing the sequester cuts that would further gut NASA programs for the exploration Mars and other planetary missions was sent to NASA administration Charles Bolden, signed by a bipartisan group of members of the Senate and the House. Spaceref.com posted the letter on April 19 under the headline, "Call on NASA to Not Gut Planetary Science". Initiated by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), the letter was joined by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA).

The text of the letter says:

Dear Administrator Bolden:

We write to express opposition to any Fiscal Year 2013 NASA Operating Plan that disproportionately applies sequester and across-the-board cuts to the Science budget.

Both the House and Senate rejected the Administration's FY 13 budget proposal to drastically reduce available funding for the Mars, Outer Planets and Discovery missions, within Planetary Science. H.R. 933 and the accompanying report language provide NASA specific instructions on how to fund a balanced Planetary Science portfolio:

- \* \$192,000,000 for Planetary Science Research;
- \* \$243,980,000 for Discovery;
- \* \$175,000,000 for New Frontiers;
- \* \$450,800,000 for Mars Exploration; and
- \* \$159,000,000 for Outer Planets.

The report provides further instruction for the Mars and Outer Planets programs:

- "Within the amount provided for Mars Exploration, \$146,400,000

is for the continued development of the MAVEN mission, \$65,000,000 is for operation of the Mars Science Laboratory and \$239,400,000 is for other Mars activities, including the formulation of a future Mars mission that is responsive to the scientific goals of the most recent planetary science decadal survey and the potential completion of instrumentation or other contributions to international Mars exploration efforts."

- "Within the amount provided for Outer Planets, \$75,000,000 shall be for pre-formulation and/or formulation activities in support of a mission that achieves the scientific goals laid out in the Jupiter Europa section of the most recent planetary science decadal survey. These activities include, but are not limited to, concept studies and concept development, technology development and requirements definition."

While we fully understand that the funding levels enumerated in the bill and report are subject to change to reflect the across the board and sequester cuts, we expect that the balance among programs will remain consistent with the structure directed by Congress. We appreciate your personal attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to ensure a workable and robust Planetary Sciences program.