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A.R.I.A.A.
Associazione Ricercatori Italiani in Astronomia e Astrofisica

Rome, July 8th 2011

Dr. John P. Holdren
Assistent to the President for Science and Technology
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
725 17th Street Room 5228
Washington, DC 20502

RE: James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) project

The Italian Association of Researchers in Astronomy and Astrophysics (A.R.I.A.A.: <http://www.ariaa.org/>) is concerned by recent developments possibly affecting the future of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) and join to the concerns of other national and international societies.

JWST promises to be one of the world leading instruments for the coming decade in astronomy focusing on the many questions related to the origins of planets, stars and galaxies. Many major developments in world astronomy, like the ALMA array and the giant telescope E-ELT, are being designed and developed taking into account the expected capabilities of JWST. A large part of the worldwide astronomical community, including many Italian astronomers, has planned their research programs for the coming years building on JWST capabilities, trusting that it will be launched as planned. The loss of JWST would therefore damage astronomy in a major way in the USA, and in the World.

Beyond the loss in the financial investments, in human resources allocated to the program, and in the progress of our knowledge of the Universe, the end of the JWST programme would also jeopardize the crucial educational role than the Hubble Space Telescope provided the common people, and not only scientists.

The members of the Italian Association of Researchers in Astronomy and Astrophysics hope that fruitful solutions will be found to complete the JWST programme.

Sincerely yours.

For Italian Association of Researchers in Astronomy and Astrophysics,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Angelo Antonelli", is written on a light blue background.

Dr. L. Angelo Antonelli, President.

Associazione Ricercatori Italiani in Astronomia e Astrofisica: Vicolo D'Orfeo, 7 00193 Rome, Italy
PRESIDENZA: Tel.: +39 06 94286475, FAX: +39 06 9447243, E-mail: presidenza@ariaa.org



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Cc:

The Honorable Charles Bolden
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Cc:

Dr. Richard Howard
Deputy Chief Technologist, JWST program manager
NASA HQ

Cc:

Dr. Alan P. Boss,
Chair of the NASA Advisory Council, Astrophysics subcommittee

Cc:

Prof. Debra M. Elmegreen
President American Astronomical Society

Cc:

Prof. Dan Clemens
Chair AURA