

AURA Reaction to Proposed Cancellation of JWST

July 6, 2011—Today, AURA strongly objected to the proposal by the House Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee to terminate the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). JWST remains the world's foremost effort to push the boundaries of astronomy and astrophysics.

Over the past year, NASA managers and the science community have undertaken a concerted effort to establish a budget and technology plan that allows the launch of JWST by 2018. The proposal by the Congress to terminate the program comes at a time when these efforts are coming to fruition. In addition, in June, NASA contractors completed the polishing and fabrication of all of the JWST mirrors completing one of the most challenging technical hurdles.

In commenting on the proposed cancellation, Dr. William S. Smith, President of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy said *"Against a backdrop of widespread discussion over the future of NASA and the human spaceflight program, it is tragic that the Congress is also proposing to curtail NASA's science program. JWST is NASA's premier science facility, unsurpassed by any other telescope now or in the future"*

Dr. Dan Clemens of Boston University, Chair of the AURA Board, said *"The science community has planned and eagerly anticipated JWST since it was identified as the highest priority astronomy program over a decade ago. The importance of its science has only increased since then. I hope that this year's final appropriations bill will provide the needed support to complete this program."*

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