

November 29, 2021

Representative Don Beyer
Chair, Subcommittee on Space – Science, Space,
& Technology Committee
1119 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4608

Representative Brian Babin
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Space – Science,
Space, & Technology Committee
2236 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4336

Representative Haley Stevens
Chair, Subcommittee on Research – Science,
Space, & Technology Committee
1510 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2211

Representative Michael Waltz
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Research –
Science, Space, & Technology Committee
213 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0906

Dear Chair Beyer, Ranking Member Babin, Chair Stevens, and Ranking Member Waltz,

I am writing on behalf of the American Astronomical Society to thank you for holding a joint hearing on the just-released National Academies' report: *Pathways to Discovery in Astronomy and Astrophysics for the 2020s*. This most recent decadal survey continues a 60-year tradition of community-based priority setting for the astronomical sciences, ensuring that federal investments are supporting the most ambitious, balanced, and sustainable science. The ground-breaking discoveries outlined in the priorities of previous survey reports would not have been possible without the strong, sustained support of Congress—including both of your subcommittees. Our community is thankful for your interest, support, and oversight.

We trust that you will find this latest survey to be a compelling framework for the next decade of research and discovery in astronomy and astrophysics. In addition to outlining three major research priority areas, the survey committee recommends a “technology development first” approach in the construction of large missions and projects, allowing for timely development of projects and more precise budget control. The high priority placed on project management for both space- and ground-based facilities reflects our community's strong commitment to ensuring maximum return on the taxpayer investment in NASA, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Energy.

We are pleased as the professional society that this survey also places high priority on specific programs and policies centered on the health of our profession. The report makes detailed recommendations for foundational activities, providing a path to invest in the people, the scientific research, and the technological leaps that will drive tomorrow's scientific discoveries.

Thank you again for the subcommittees' long-standing, bipartisan support for the astronomical sciences. We look forward to working with you to help realize these new, exciting priorities.

Sincerely,



Paula Szkody,
President, American Astronomical Society