

May 25, 2022

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 oversight hearing on the recently released National Academies' report: [Origins, Worlds, and Life: A Decadal Strategy for Planetary Science and Astrobiology 2023-2032](#). This decadal survey continues a well-respected tradition of community consensus in prioritization of scientific goals. With these surveys, we continue expanding our exploration of the solar system. We have “Dare[ed] Mighty Things,” landing an ambitious new rover on Mars and achieving flight on another planet for the first time. These achievements 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.

Origins, Worlds, and Life sets forth a compelling vision for advancing the frontiers of planetary science, astrobiology, and planetary defense. It proposes ambitious but realistic pathways to expand our understanding of our solar system's origins, how planets form and evolve, under what conditions life can survive, and where to find potentially habitable environments in our solar system and beyond. A balanced slate of missions from small Discovery class projects to large flagships will enable groundbreaking discoveries. Closer to home, this decade's plans for human exploration of the Moon and preparatory activities at Mars present opportunities for collaboration and technology development. The decadal presents a program of scientific exploration whereby science enables human exploration and human exploration enables science. Finally, the survey emphasizes the importance of the human element. Ensuring broad access and participation is required to recruit, retain, and nurture the best talent, and to support continued American leadership in planetary science and astrobiology.

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