

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Paul Broun (R-Georgia)
Hearing on Top Challenges for Science Agencies: Reports from the Inspectors General Part 1**

Chairman Broun: Good morning. The title of today's hearing is "Top Challenges for Science Agencies: Reports from the Inspectors General - Part 1." This is the first of two hearings where we will hear from witnesses from the Offices of Inspectors General representing agencies within this Committee's jurisdiction. The object of the hearing is to learn about the major performance and management challenges facing each agency from the perspective of each Office of the Inspector General.

Today we will hear from the IG offices with jurisdiction over the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Commerce. It is my hope is that this information will help inform my colleagues - on both sides of the aisle - about the issues at the agencies over which we have a responsibility to conduct thorough, but appropriate, oversight. With the President's budget expected shortly, this hearing will help us, as an authorizing Committee, to coordinate with the Appropriations Committee, by identifying for that Committee programs, projects and activities that work, as opposed to those that need to be modified or perhaps eliminated.

There is no shortage of issues. This Committee has a history of probing NASA, especially in the area of information technology security, where last year, we held a hearing on the topic. Unfortunately, some of the issues I raised back then are still outstanding today. In addition to the revelation that NASA needs to do more to protect sensitive information from going out the back door through cyber intrusions and lax protocols, I am increasingly concerned about the possibility of sensitive information going out the front door - possibly with tacit approval from research centers. The National Aeronautics and Space Act has the dual responsibility of providing "the widest practical dissemination of information concerning its activities and results" as well as, establishing "such security requirements, restrictions, and safeguards as the Administrator deems necessary in the interest of the national security." Similarly, the Act also gave NASA broad authority to enter into agreements outside of the normal federal acquisitions process. Originally meant to support smaller-scale projects, it has increasingly been used for larger, multi-million dollar procurements.

NASA is not the only agency that has this authority. The NSF has roughly \$11 billion tied up in other transaction authorities such as Cooperative Agreements, which, like NASA's Space Act Agreements, also do not carry the same oversight and transparency requirements as contracts.

The Department of Commerce, which includes bureaus such as NOAA, which in turn houses the National Weather Service, has been the focus of this Committee since over a year ago when we started hearing claims about financial mismanagement and Anti-deficiency Act violations. That culminated in a September 2012 hearing, for which we still have not received agency responses to questions we submitted for the record. And I can't talk about NOAA without mentioning its satellite programs, which

are of great concern to this Committee, particularly in light of potential gaps in future coverage. These are symptoms of what I perceive to be larger management challenges at NOAA.

This exercise of deliberating over a program's performance and challenges is a particularly timely one because as you all know starting tomorrow, federal agencies will do the exact opposite, and implement across-the-board indiscriminate funding cuts as a result of the sequester. The House of Representatives, on more than one occasion, has tried to offer a solution to prevent these cuts from taking place, but we've hit a wall with the Senate and the Administration.

Now I know I don't always see eye-to-eye with my friends on the other side of the aisle, but I respect them, and believe we share the same goal regardless of which side of the room we sit in, and that is to serve our respective constituents in the best manner possible. To that end, I urge my colleagues - Republicans and Democrats alike - to take advantage of the opportunity this hearing presents, and question the witnesses about the agencies within their jurisdiction.