



Royal
Astronomical
Society

Dr Dara Norman
President
American Astronomical Society

3 July 2025

Dear Dr Norman,

Cuts to NASA science and National Science Foundation budgets

I am writing to you as the President of the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) to express our support for our colleagues and friends in the United States, who are directly affected by the proposed catastrophic cuts to the NASA and National Science Foundation (NSF) budgets.

The RAS represents astronomers, space scientists, and geophysicists in 70 countries around the world, including in the US, and we are deeply concerned at these proposals. If the cuts are enacted, they will have a devastating impact on ground- and space-based astronomy, and related disciplines such as solar and solar-terrestrial physics.

As you know, the scale of what is planned is extraordinary, with 57% cuts to the NSF, and areas of NASA science cut by 50% and more. This is an unprecedented and deeply regrettable scaling back of US investment in research, and we would like to express our support to our colleagues and friends who will be directly affected by this retrenchment.

The economic benefits of investment in science and technology are well documented, and something common to advanced economies in the West. Nations such as China are now following a similar track, and are seeing their world ranking rise as a result. It is truly astounding and deeply troubling to watch the USA even contemplate vandalising its own skills base and throw away its global leadership in science, medicine and technology.

If implemented, the cuts will also have an impact that resonates far beyond American shores. Since at least 1945, the US has driven scientific progress across the world, including in the sciences the Society represents. There will be immediate consequences for international collaborations on observatories, space missions and research projects more generally, and many of these will either be forced to close or will never come to fruition.

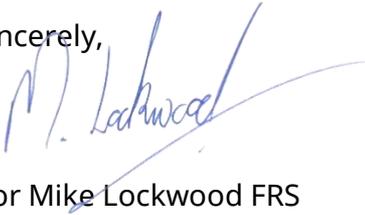
Examples of future missions at risk are those planned in partnership with the European Space Agency, including the gravitational wave observatory LISA, the Venus orbiter EnVision and the NewAthena X-ray observatory. In areas like solar physics, vital datasets may be lost, with concomitant impacts on understanding societal risks such as adverse space weather. Overall

Burlington House
Piccadilly
London W1J 0BQ
+44 (0)20 7734 4582
www.ras.ac.uk

such a drastic curtailment is likely to end the reputation of the United States as a reliable scientific partner.

The RAS is based in the United Kingdom, so we recognise that organisations like the American Astronomical Society are better placed to exert political influence. Nonetheless our Fellowship wishes to express its solidarity with our American peers and colleagues, to urge the US administration to reverse this disastrous decision, and if that does not happen, for Congress to reject it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Lockwood', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Professor Mike Lockwood FRS
President
Royal Astronomical Society