



SPIE

Connecting minds. Advancing light.

SPIE.org
SPIE@SPIE.org

Mail: PO Box 10
Bellingham, WA
98227-0010

Ship: 1000 20th Street
Bellingham, WA
98225-6705 USA

Tel: +1 360 676 3290
Fax: +1 360 647 1445

5 August 2011 – SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics, strongly objects to the decision of the U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Space to terminate the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). This proposal wastes billions of taxpayer dollars already invested in the project, undermines American leadership and innovation in space technology, and will eliminate much-needed jobs and economic growth at a time of critical importance for our country.

We understand that the proposed cuts to JWST come as part of a larger effort by Congress to rein in federal spending. Unfortunately, NASA and other federal science agencies and programs have been unduly targeted in these cuts. While SPIE fully supports improved and informed oversight of all federal spending on science and technology and recognizes the importance of beginning to reduce the deficit, we need be smart about the reductions. Federal support for science will spur economic growth and help restore a firm fiscal foundation for our nation. JWST is symbolic of our nation's science and technology future and provides an opportunity for Congress to demonstrate its commitment to supporting this key job-creating field. More than 50 years of experience shows that a strong federal commitment to scientific research is crucial to building a better America.

NASA's 2012 budget proposal asked Congress for \$375 million for JWST for the coming year — hundreds of millions less than what the Independent Comprehensive Review Panel estimated the program would need to keep the launch from extending beyond 2015. More than 75% of the telescope's hardware has already been delivered. It takes decades for space telescope missions to be fulfilled, and due to their duration and complexity, it is imperative that NASA be provided with a stable, long-term budget to avoid inefficiencies and achieve its missions.

Now is not the time to abandon a project in which U.S. taxpayers have already invested so much. Just as Hubble has added enormously to our understanding of the universe over the last 20 years, once launched JWST will contribute unanticipated new discoveries and capture the imagination of an entirely new generation of Americans. In this era of boundless discovery and exploration, it is even more critical to ensure a robust national commitment to both manned and scientific space programs and to maintain America's leadership in space science.

SPIE calls upon all members of the House Appropriations Committee and all members of Congress to support and fully fund JWST at the President's request of \$375 million per year and see it to its completion.

R.A. Lieberman
Director of SPIE

SPIE is the largest international not-for-profit society in optics, photonics and imaging. Together with our 16,000 individual members and 450 corporate members, the Society seeks to build a better world with light through scientific education and innovation. www.spie.org

SPIE is an international society advancing an interdisciplinary approach to the science and application of light.