



NASA Town Hall – Thursday, May 17

Announcement

Administrator Jim Bridenstine will host an agency town hall from 11 a.m. to noon EDT Thursday, May 17. Ask your questions of the administrator here!

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 Ask

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214

In your confirmation hearing, you vowed to protect NASA from partisan politics and its gay and lesbian employees from discrimination. Yet many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender NASA employees remain concerned about how your personal views will impact the workplace environment. Can you please address this concern?


169

Why should LGBTQ+ employees feel safe with a boss who has criticized same sex marriage?


164

Your position on climate science has changed a lot over 6 years: what is your current view & what, specifically, informs it?


151

Your administration is slashing federal retirement benefits, instituting a wage freeze after noting how underpaid senior civil servants are, and talking about cutting opportunities to advance on the salary scale. How do you expect NASA to

retain and keep talent now that there are numerous science-based aerospace competitors who seem to value their employees?


107

What specifically leads you to believe that human activity is not the primary driver of climate change?


98

Is there a possibility of restoring funding for the office of education? Much of NASA's mission has been to educate and inspire the next generation of scientist and engineers. The loss of this office is severely hampering this effort.


85

What is the rationale for cancelling Resource Prospector? This mission is directly in line with your stated goals for lunar exploration, and it's ready to go forward. In addition, it represents an important step forward for NASA in working with the private sector and achieving effective lower cost missions. Starting over with a new mission to accomplish similar goals would add years of delay. All we need is the word from you and we're ready to move out.


83

40% of the NASA workforce will be eligible to retire in the next five years; what actions are you taking to keep NASA strong?


76

How will your administration prioritize climate science?


74

The US is falling behind in hypersonics. There is talk of a "national hypersonic initiative". How can NASA be more involved in this very important national security and aeronautics issue?


73

The recent cancellation of the Resource Prospector mission seems to make absolutely no sense. It could have been a

perfect pilot project for starting up joint NASA/industry lunar exploration, where a commercial partner contributes the lander, while NASA contributes the rover with instruments capable of finding water ice deposits (obviously invaluable for any long-term activity on the Moon). The mission was perfectly aligned with the renewed focus on the Moon and could have been ready for launch in three years, if not sooner. Now a significant effort by many dedicated engineers & scientists will be wasted because of silly HQ politics. Will you consider restoring funding for this mission?


64

What part of your background qualifies you to accurately judge and direct scientific research?


51

What are your top goals for the agency for the next 12 months?


48

How do you intend to lead an Agency that is a proud supporter of Diversity and Inclusion which is at odds with your personal moral beliefs?


47

How will your administration reach out to the public about climate change?


45

After a career in politics, how do you plan to divorce yourself from habits & practices while leading a non-partisan agency?


40

There are many NASA employees close to retirement age. I was disheartened to hear about the Administration's plans for reducing benefits for new federal retirees. Many of us have dedicated our lives as loyal civil servants to ensure the United States stays the leader in space exploration. We

earned those benefits now proposed to be removed. I implore you to speak with the Administration to get them to change course. The President values loyalty first and foremost from his employees. I agree! Please be loyal to you faithful civil servants who are close to retiring.


40

What SPECIFICALLY causes you to reject the consensus about climate change, as you have attested to on the house floor?


39

What is your plan to retain or recruit top talent? Why should young engineers & scientists come to work at NASA "family"?


38

At this time, China has an on-going lunar program and many other countries have planning their own including long-term human presence on the Moon. What is your vision of international collaboration for NASA's lunar program? Will it be coordinated with other international efforts?


32

NASA is at the lowest point in its history. In 60 years, our capabilities have declined, not improved. We rely on our Cold War enemy to get our astronauts into space. We've become an Agency afraid of the media and its own shadow, more concerned with dotting the "i"s and crossing the "t"s than being explorers, despite the risk. What is being done to make NASA great again?


30

There has been a lot of discussion in the press about increased use of public/private partnerships. Do you see a role for some of the newer government contractors such as SpaceX in the Exploration of the Moon and Mars?


30

NASA has consistently been ranked as one of the best Agencies to work for within the Federal Government for

years now. What are your plans for ensuring the Agency's effective leadership, training and development, and work-life balance will continue to achieve such high standards?

28

NASA is way too top heavy, with about 10 times the bureaucrats it needs, while anyone trying to do real science is starved for funding. We're rehashing the same technology, but 0.001% better, and pretending that will get us to Mars. It won't work. Many scientists have been here for decades, coasting on doing the same thing, and the programs continue to get funded, but anyone with bold new ideas that we need suffers. NASA needs a lot of fat eliminated. Is the leadership aware of this? What is being done to snap the culture here out of its malaise and mediocrity?

28

The National Hypersonics Initiative is being developed. What is NASA going to undertake to catch-up and keep a step ahead of China in the use of hypersonic airbreathing propulsion for civil hypersonic transport and access to space?

26

What are your ideas about maternity/paternity leave when it specifically comes to NASA?

23

What is your view on key earth science missions such as PACE that were cut in presidential budgets, but restored by congress?

22

When are we going to have an honest engineering assessment of the current LOP-G plan and realize it is a slap in the face to the president and space council request to go back to the surface of the Moon. The current architecture is more about white collar welfare than making actual progress to boots on the moon (BOM). This is our John Houbolt moment if you are willing to take the hard look at what is

required for BOM. It is time for a 90 day study with the agency involving interested commercial and international partners to come up with a sustainable and achievable architecture that can get us to BOM by 2024.

20

Can you give us an update on the reorganization of STMD and HEOMD (i.e., the creation of the Exploration Research and Technology (ER&T) organization)?

20

Why are we doing LOP-G besides it being a bootstrap paradox to justify the continued development of SLS & Orion it is akin to an out of the way rest stop in Montreal when the president asked for a plan to go from Boston (earth) to NYC (lunar surface)

20

How will the administration financially support basic research? "Basic" as in: curiosity driven research that has no primary application for industry in mind.

19

How do you envision NASA's strategic goals and objectives changing in the short-term (3 - 5 years)? Or do you?

18

As an agency, NASA is always looking for new ways to grow and influence leaders. What new leadership programs or philosophies will you bring to the agency to help train and equip leaders to forward NASA's mission?

18

What are you going to do to better align the centers and modernize how they operate? There is too much chicken in every pot /pet projects and archaic tools, processes and mentalities at the centers that cause inefficient work, stifles innovation, redundant efforts and infighting. We need to assess the capabilities and figure out the clear roles and responsibilities to achieve boots on the moon and the other

things in a modern age of operations. It is time to reignite the engine of innovation this agency once had when it was focused with a clear goal.

17

It's a huge task getting to know each center's technical and managerial strengths and weaknesses, and then to weave those together to into a cohesive approach to running this Agency. Could you explain your approach and is a reorganization at the HQ/Center Mission/directorate level a possibility?

17

What are your goals for your first year as the NASA Administrator?

16

How does NASA's vision and mission fit within the larger science & technology policy of the current Administration?

15

When are we going back to the MOON, I would like to know the date please? Thanks Dale Wilson

15

NASA inspires the next generation by making the impossible happen. Unfortunately it seems the agency's bold vision of space exploration is becoming mired in politics and with centers and scientists only concerned with their project or cause. (Example: many of the question in this list...) Can you set a bold goal for NASA that can inspire the world again? Can we actually do something other than studies? Thank you.

15

It took 66 years for humanity to go from the first airplane, to setting foot on the moon. It has been 46 years since we last went to the moon and it seems like NASA's progress has slowed to a halt. We have become a dinosaur. We cannot make up for the decades we have squandered, but what are

we going to do to revive (and sustain) the Apollo era ambition and energy to achieve tangible milestones for humanity? This is not a question about individual missions, but about changing the overall goals and attitudes of NASA as an organization.


14

How do you envision Blue Origin's New Shepard, New Glenn, and SpaceX's Falcon Heavy launch vehicles integrating in to NASA's spaceflight missions with our currently manifested flights on Falcon 9, Atlas V, and SLS?


14

We're competing with a lot of new non traditional aerospace companies for skilled talent. Do you have some early ideas on how to position NASA in this environment?


14

Do you have the backing off the president and space council to take on the Alabama mafia and the other enemies of progress so we can come up with a realistic plan that leverages capabilities outside the gate to achieve the president goal of boots on the Moon by the 55 the anniversary of Apollo 11.


13

What can leadership do to improve internal communication within the NASA community? The value of leading is communicating. If NASA had a defined intranet, all NASA Agencies can work together as part of the bigger picture and become one NASA. Internal communication access to NASA employees would add value by crowdsourcing and engaging NASA communities like never before. There have been several ideas and attempts in the past years, but none defined. What are the plans to improve the current state?


13

Do you envision using "Buy-Outs" or "Early-Outs" to trim the NASA workforce?


13

What specifically are your goals to get more under represented minorities involved in astronomy, physics, engineering, and NASA?


12

Glad NASA is working on new X-planes (All electric X-57 and Low Boom Flight Demonstrator). Is hypersonic x-plane in the plan?


12

What are your goals to help younger scientists and engineers advance in their careers?


11

Is Mars human exploration a priority or simply an eventuality of our deep space capability development? Should we be 1st to Mars?


11

NASA Aeronautics just announced the start of construction on a quiet supersonic x-plane that creates a “thump” instead of a BOOM. Our goal is to make it possible to fly supersonic over land. This is a unique message compared to that of several companies working to build supersonic business jets. Based on your Hill experience how do we keep our long-view high-impact goal in front of key stakeholders.


11

So NASA has had a long history of inspiring the next generation of explorers through a broad variety of ways. While it's true that our missions do inspire and engage – the activities in the Office of Education and at the field centers are key elements of our efforts to truly engage with students at all levels. What are your thoughts on recent proposals from the Administration to redirect education funds to other Agency priorities?


10

Do you have someone in mind to serve as Deputy Administrator?

9

Could you touch on your overall philosophy with respect to the commercialization of spacecraft and launch vehicle assembly, integration, launch and long term operations? If the CCP model is shown to be successful in the areas of risk management and fiscal efficiencies, in your mind does that open the door to consider other new and existing NASA Human Spaceflight Program(s) to utilize the same model?

9

“Innovation” has become a sort of buzzword within the research and business communities that takes on many different meanings depending on who you are talking to. What does innovation mean to you in terms of NASA’s mission? Moreover, what do the results of innovation look like, and, because we love metrics so much, how would the Agency be able to measure the successful innovation?

9

My previous question was moderated/deleted; I think the question was valid. Will the new administrator disclose the Secret Space Program (SSP); Lunar Operational Center (LOC); 'free energy' technologies; and interactions with non-terrestrial beings?

9

On NASA websites, we currently have six communication focus areas, sometimes referred to as "The Big 6". They prominently appear across the top of the www.nasa.gov. These include International Space Station, Journey to Mars, Earth, Technology, Aeronautics, and Solar System and Beyond. When will we see a 'Reaching the Lunar Surface' Communication Theme, instead of embedding it in Journey to Mars? The Moon is much more important than just being a "stepping stone to Mars", something we say at NASA way too often.

8

Do you plan on promoting and supporting the very strong

history of climate science and studying climate change at GSFC?

8

Could you help us understand your philosophy for how, considering competing resources, launch campaigns, (and a particular provider that seems set on "beating SLS to Mars") you see separate, but potentially mutually supportive architectures, being used cooperatively to get NASA past the Moon and onto Mars.

8

How will your administration aim to be different from previous administrations?

8

What do you see as the top two challenges facing NASA and how do you plan to address those challenges?

8

The Administration and you strongly support public-private partnerships, which is all to the good. However, we have a problem inside NASA: the Proven successful "COTS Model" of funded Public-Private Partnerships, has NOT been used by NASA to start a new program in 8 yrs due to bureaucratic opposition within the agency, in spite of several attempts. How, specifically, will you overcome this bureaucratic opposition, including among many of your senior mission and Center directors, etc? Since the Administration's initiative will fail unless you specifically overcome this internal opposition. Dave Huntsman

7

What can scientists do to help the public understand climate science is not agenda driven, but follows the scientific method?

7

I have a hybrid Volt and work at the LCC there are no charging stations available near me, is there any plans in the

future to make charging stations available, even for a charging fee if necessary?



What are you most curious about when it comes to NASAeronautics?



Why is the Moon landing never, ever celebrated? We get emails about all sorts of things, why not this? Why are we seemingly ashamed of this monumental triumph of our nation's history?



This is an exciting and revolutionary point in humanity's journey to the to stars. The number and variety of spacecraft and launch vehicles is greater than it has ever been and private venture capital investment in space is now near \$4B and increasing rapidly. What is NASA's role in this new era of space exploration?



NASA's institutional and programmatic facilities continue to age and deteriorate faster than we are able to revitalize, rehabilitate, or replace them, while CMO and Construction of Facility budgets continue to be reduced across the agency. What is your plan to address this ever growing issue?



How will you prioritize climate science at NASA?



I am part of a contract renewal process in which the average pay offered to contractors by the new contracting company is 11% lower than for the present, expiring contract. Half the people I work with are leaving for better-paying work, or retiring, and morale is low among those who chose to join the new contract, with lower wages. It seems that NASA does not value its human resources.


7

Since the Apollo Mission days, NASA has struggled to maintain single projects over long periods of time, due to shifting political priorities and Administrations wishing to "make their mark" on space exploration. How will you, as Administrator, ensure that NASA will see its current and future projects to completion?


6

How do you like being at NASA?


6

What will your administration do to help reduce the primary cause of climate change: human activity?


6

What current impediments do you see to promoting public and private partnerships in space? How would you address them?


6

Proven successfl COTS Modl of PPP not been used by NASA to start program in 8 yrs due to bureaucratc opposition. How overcome?


6

How are you going to prioritize basic research in terms of the budget: what will be more/less important?


6

Science recently alerted about the cancellation of new funding for NASA's Carbon Monitoring System (CMS) Initiative. Are you committed to restore funding for CMS? And, are you committed to maintain and/or increase funding for carbon research and climate science?


6

What is one thing you want the nation to know about the first "a" in NASA?


6

As you know, NASA Aeronautics is coalescing the

burgeoning, to use colloquial terms, “drone/flying car” market around solving the safety challenges of urban air mobility for the good of the nation. We’re working to corral a wild Wild West. Do you have thoughts at this point about what NASA can say to get people to come to the table?


6

ISS going commercial, Orion/Human launch 2023, SLS struggling, Moon GW in 6 yrs, how can NASA be RelevantIn HumanSpaceflight?


6

Why does the moon matter for US exploration of space?


6

The NASA aircraft fleet consists primarily of older military aircraft "hand me downs"... will there be a plan to reassess future NASA aviation flight requirements (in support of all Mission Directorates, not just ARMD) and provide funding to replace older aircraft with newer, more capable aircraft that can continue to operate safely and effectively into the future?


6

In your official government position as Administrator, you– inappropriately– continue to go on right–wing, religious shows; something no other Administrator has ever done. When will you stop this?


5

Will James Webb Telescope ever get off the ground and if so, when do you anticipate it going up, and on what vehicle?


5

How do you prefer to receive information about NASA programs, projects and activities around the agency?


5

NASA is historically stove–piped, but strength can come from diversity. Thoughts on space/aero centers collaborating more?


5

Since the current federal employee survey – FEVS – is underway for 2018 will you be taking time to compare prior scores and hold NASA executives accountable?


5

NASA has been mandated to "Lead an innovative and sustainable program of exploration with commercial and international partners to enable human expansion across the solar system...." How do you plan to accomplish this beyond short-term trips to the Moon and eventually to Mars?


5

Contractors are treated like cannon fodder. A significant portion of NASA expertise is lies in people on soft money who wait years to be hired as civil servants. Then there's Pathways interns, who get hired after only a few years of grad school intern work and have far less experience than most contract researchers. This is unwise and leaves NASA vulnerable to the Congress's "budget games of chicken" and better paying employers. What will you do to make the civil servant hiring process more fair to contractors?


5

We all spend way too much time worrying about which job order code "WBS" to which we should charge our time, as if we were creating factory widgets. Not to mention the large bureaucracy that has grown to track these codes. Seems like our time could be better spent. Can something be done to simplify this unnecessary process?


4

Would you consider increasing NASA's role in developing aerial vehicle technologies for natural disaster relief operations?


4

Are there any plans to coordinate the Lunar Orbital Platform-Gateway with ULA's CisLunar-1000 plan?



International cooperation (and resources) may help us get to the surface of the Moon and on to Mars quicker than if we go it alone. What is your view of including other countries in the NASA vision to transport humans to the Moon and on to Mars?



I'm afraid we threw the baby out with the bath water when it comes to Near Earth Objects (NEO). While I believe the Asteroid Retrieval Mission (ARM) was rightfully canceled, it seems NASA has turned away from NEOs in general. One of the most important things we could do for NASA and the country in the next five years is get a NEO survey mission in space, for both planetary defense reasons (as requested for by Congress), and for understanding the potential of in situ resource utilization (ISRU) of asteroid materials. In both cases, we need a better understanding of what's out there. What are your thoughts on the importance of a NEO survey mission?



When the seas all rise, how do you plan on growing gills?



How will the Administration's focus on cost-savings impact NASA? Is there an appetite for cost-saving efforts at the Agency?



What is your vision and the path you see moving forward for NASA?



How do you like to receive information about NASA activities, projects and programs around the agency?



What are the important questions in physics and cosmology that you're interested in NASA making progress on?



Will this administration be equal advocates of NASA's core values, of Excellence, Integrity, Teamwork, and Safety?



As a researcher, I feel I must constantly watch for the next safety/security/IT knife to the back. The bureaucracy justifies why it can't be cut through the number of pelts (meaning findings) it carves out of our hides. This also encourages an ever-tightening boa constrictor of rules that are impossible to find out beforehand. It is no wonder NASA is a shell of its former self. What will you do to rein this in?



My Center is poorly managed following a "do as I say" management. Poor facilities. Please flatten the organization!



The NASA budget has been flat for about 20 years. Yet money for research and projects continues to tighten. Broadly, where does it all go? Is this all inflation driven, (i.e., workforce cost-of-living raises), or have some programs (SLS, climate science, etc.) crowded out other programs or research in general?



We in the trenches are constantly grappling with "do more with less." Many of our buildings are outdated and researchers are doing the work of several people to shore up the difference. Not surprisingly, the patent and paper quality has declined. That said, I don't expect Congress or the public to wake up and give us more money. What plan do you have to trim the fat in the system and give it to the people who need it?



Let's flip the climate science question around. The government is supposed to be fair and impartial, and yet NASA overwhelmingly pushes climate change as human driven. There are many climate scientists who disagree with

this, but there is no debate, no hashing out of facts. Of the climate science research that remains, will you push to have a more balanced presentation of facts? Will we see for/against debates, where science decides and not politics?

3

The previous administration set NASA adrift when it killed the Constellation program and announced a policy change to use a DARPA model for NASA R&D programs. How can we get NASA more focused on it's primary mission of space exploration (both manned and unmanned) for the long term, without the boom-bust philosophy of the Apollo & Shuttle programs?

3

According to the Columbia Accident Report, contributing factors included a shrinking budget, pressures from congress, a stressed and overtasked workforce, and the loss of skilled workers due to layoffs and retirements. NASA had to choose between program elimination or attempting to juggle all requirements with a "faster, better, cheaper" motto. The agency chose the faster, better, cheaper option with disregard to safety. I see parallels in our current situation. Do you feel NASA is too diverse in its mission, and do you see us focusing more on exploration and eliminating the wider scope of work in order to restore our reputation as a leader in space and aviation and ultimately reach of goals of the moon and mars?

3

The most dynamic teams at JSC are stymied by arbitrary roadblocks that prevent proper staffing and adequate floor space to handle funded work. This is rooted in sad attempts to hang on to the old JSC that is no longer relevant to the current exploration culture of commercialization and international collaboration. How will you hold center management accountable for getting out of the way of progress?


3

I think its important to at least be a big dreamer here at NASA – Gimme some Sci-fi-like goals you have for NASA? Big Picture stuff. Go.


3

NASA Glenn Research (& Technology) Center no longer adequately supports Foundational Research. In fact, the phrase often heard from management "playing in their sandboxes" is meant to convey how unacceptable it is for NASA Scientists to be caught doing Foundational/Breakthrough Research. Numerous modern day technologies were discovered via this type of Research yet NASA has lost it's way and no longer supports it. Will you Make NASA Great Again by restoring NASA's "Seed Corn" of Basic/Foundational/Breakthrough Research ?


2

Is there some possibility that MSFC will be going to a 9/40 pay period for the entire center? If yes, in what timeframe? Would you also address the current management rumor that MSFC will not be open on July 5th and 6th?


2

What are your current top three goals as NASA Administrator?


2

How will you break down barriers between HEO and SMD? Merging the two teams to work on common goals is the only way NASA can realistically pursue human exploration beyond LEO.


2

Would you consider adding advisory teams for each major project composed, of people from within and outside of NASA to help eliminate outdated views on how NASA approaches its goals and to impart pressure to innovate? These teams should not be populated with career bureaucrats.


2

How can we address private aerospace companies poaching our skilled workforce because we cannot offer competitive salaries?


2

The shuttle program was ended almost 7 years ago. The plan was to have manned commercial space flight to fill the gap, but there's no end in sight. Is there a target date for regaining manned flight? And what will be done to prevent contractors like SpaceX, Boeing, etc. from jacking up the price as we have no in-house manned spacecraft?


1

How does cosmology fit into your research goals?


1

COTS is a misnomer. There are no COTS builders of F-35 planes, nuclear submarines, or aircraft carriers. There is only one customer for deep space craft – the government. All are built by companies/contractors for the US government. Why should NASA keep funding one set of companies under the guise of COTS, giving the American public the impression they are doing great things that NASA cannot or will not do?

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