

Message From The FRS Chair: The President's FY2017 Budget Request

On Tuesday the President's Fiscal Year 2017 budget request was released. The request is consistent with the Administration's past requests and stated priorities. Links are included below to details and commentary. Although there are few surprises in this request, there is some confusion. If you read the request you will see that it includes "discretionary" and "mandatory", resulting in two interpretations of the request: For example, NASA either has a top line of \$18.3B or \$19B. The \$18.3B number fits within the budget caps but the \$19B does not. The argument is that \$19B, though over the budget caps and would require additional legislation, is what NASA needs to continue with plans that were funded in FY2016. (Mandatory spending requires specific legislation to add/change — for example entitlements — while discretionary spending is where most federal science and R&D funding resides.) You may recall that back in the President's FY2015 budget request, the numbers included "Opportunity, Growth and Security Initiative (OGSI)" money that went above budget caps. Congress ignored those numbers back in the FY2015 process and are highly likely to again in FY2017.

As in recent years, the Administration and Congress are at odds on a number of priorities, planetary science being one. The President's planetary request for FY2017 is \$1.52B, only \$1.39B of which is in the "discretionary" bucket. Congress appropriated \$1.63B for FY 2016. Given the ongoing conflicts between the priorities of the President and Congress, this being the lame duck stretch of this Presidency, and the fact that this Administration will be gone the second quarter of FY2017, this budget request in general could have limited impact. We will encourage Congress to continue its consistent, strong support for planetary during the upcoming appropriations process. Keep in mind that (primarily) due to the election this year, it is likely that we will see a Continuing Resolution to fund at least part of FY2017.

Read the request

at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2017/assets/budget.pdf> [1]

Read the NASA materials at <http://www.nasa.gov/news/budget/index.html> [2]

Perspective from the AAS forthcoming at <https://aas.org/policy/policy-blog> [3]

Read opinion from The Planetary Society at <http://www.planetary.org/blogs/casey-dreier/> [4]

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Links:

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