Jared Isaacman
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20546

Dear Administrator Isaacman,

We, the undersigned coalition of organizations, write to you today to jointly present and express our concerns regarding the Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Science (ROSES) solicitations. Our organizations represent tens of thousands of scientific researchers and supporters who contribute to and benefit from the efforts of the NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD). Their research is supported by every program across SMD and relies on funding awarded through ROSES. Recent changes and delays have made that funding less predictable and reliable, jeopardizing NASA's scientific return, workforce development, and U.S. leadership in Earth and space science. We write to respectfully request that NASA:

(1) Rescind the June 15, 2026 updates to the ROSES-25 solicitation that preemptively align with the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) proposed "Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance." Do not include this language in future solicitations unless the OMB rule is finalized.
(2) Disburse funds for ROSES-25 award selections in a timely and predictable manner; and
(3) Return to a regular cadence for future ROSES solicitations that follows a predictable timeline.

The grants awarded through the ROSES program are critical for maximizing the scientific return on large and small NASA missions by supporting data analysis, developing innovative analysis techniques relevant to future missions, providing the scientific backbone for the Moon Base program, enhancing our understanding and forecasting of adverse space weather events, and enabling analyses of Earth observations to strengthen resilience and economic prosperity. ROSES awards also support graduate students and other early-career researchers. When grant funding pipelines become uncertain or unstable, research groups are unable to commit to training the next generation of scientists. This impact can be seen in the 8% drop in graduate enrollment in U.S. physics and astronomy programs in fall 2025, representing the largest year-over-year decline since fall 1994.[1] We are gravely concerned that continued uncertainty in ROSES will lead to further declines, ultimately threatening the future of U.S. leadership in the Earth and space sciences.

ROSES-25 Implementation of harmful changes to federal grants

We are alarmed by the June 15, 2026 amendments to the ROSES-25 solicitation,[2] which appear to align with elements of OMB's proposed "Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance" rule.[3] The rule has not been finalized, and Congress delayed its implementation through a bipartisan vote in the Continuing

[1] Mulvey, Patrick, Trevor Owens, and Starr Nicholson. 2026. *Federal Funding and Visa Uncertainty Shape Fall 2026 Graduate Admissions in Physics and Astronomy*. American Institute of Physics. 10.1063/sr.234de1fedd.
[2] See Amendment 59: Several Updates to ROSES-25 Summary of Solicitation https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/solicitations/roses-2025/amendment-59-several-updates-to-the-roses-25-summary-of-solicitation/
[3] Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance, 91 Fed. Reg. 32198 (proposed May 29, 2026) https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/29/2026-10817/regulation-for-federal-financial-assistance

Resolution. Nearly half a million comments were submitted to OMB on the proposed Uniform Guidance revision; many identified several provisions that warrant significant revision before finalization. Yet the ROSES-25 solicitation was amended to include "pre-issuance review of discretionary awards…which shall involve in-person or virtual discussion of applications…with a senior appointee or that appointee's designee." Shifting final authority to senior appointees will significantly undermine the grant review and award system and could distort federal research priorities based on ideological or partisan agendas. Without a peer-review system focused on evaluating scientific merit, the nation's scientific enterprise will experience instability across administrations, the stifling of innovation, and eroded public confidence in research. Furthermore, this change creates a "black box" review process, making it difficult to scrutinize a senior appointee's decision-making record or understand why grants were declined, while adding an additional layer of bureaucracy to the process.

The updates to the ROSES-25 solicitation note that "awards may be terminated at the convenience of the government." Canceling grants midstream, with no option to appeal, will waste taxpayer dollars, strand prior investments, and subject research to shifting agency or political priorities. This uncertainty will significantly destabilize the U.S. research enterprise by preventing researchers from relying on multi-year awards and committing to training graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Furthermore, scientists may avoid submitting grant proposals in areas perceived as controversial, even when those fields hold considerable promise for transformative discoveries. The effect will undercut U.S. competitiveness in a global research environment where other countries offer more predictable funding streams.

Finally, the updated ROSES-25 solicitation states "all else being equal…preference may be given to institutions with lower indirect cost rates." Current indirect cost rates are methodically calculated and audited by the federal government, and represent the true cost of doing research. A blanket preference for lower rates penalizes institutions for factors unrelated to a potential project's quality or efficiency and effectively punishes academic institutions that have chosen to invest in resources and infrastructure to support those funded activities. Federal science grants should be awarded based on their ability to produce demonstrable results, advance innovation, and deliver the strongest return on public investment — not merely treated as contracts awarded to the lowest bidder.

Given the significant harm these provisions would inflict on the scientific enterprise, as well as concerns that have been voiced in a bipartisan manner by Congress, we respectfully request that NASA remove these changes to the ROSES-25 solicitation, and not include them in future grants solicitations.

Lastly, while this letter's focus is on SMD, we also note with concern that similar language appears in other NASA solicitations, specifically recent announcements from the Research & Technology Mission Directorate. The harmful consequences of this language on the American science enterprise, as outlined above, would apply to these solicitations as well.

ROSES-25 and future solicitation delays

We are deeply concerned by significant delays in the selection of awards and disbursement of funds for ROSES-25, as well as the delay in releasing a ROSES-26 solicitation. These delays have created a serious

level of unpredictability for scientists, impacting their ability to carry out research programs that advance NASA priorities and benefit all Americans.

Awards have not yet been made or were noticeably delayed for many ROSES-25 program elements, leading to a significant perturbation of standard funding timelines. For example, over the past four years, the Astrophysics Data Analysis Program (ADAP) has followed a regular cadence, with the solicitation being released in February and awards being made in October of the same year. While ADAP awards were announced on October 8, 2026, this constitutes a nearly two-year gap since the last ADAP awards were made under ROSES-24 in October 2024. The combination of both a delayed solicitation and delayed selection of awards has led to a gap in available funding that is challenging for research groups to navigate. Moreover, we have heard from the scientific community that there have been significant delays in the disbursement of funds even once ROSES-25 awards have been made, which has negatively impacted the ability of Principal Investigators to hire graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.

We remain concerned that the ROSES-26 solicitation has not yet been released. While ROSES solicitations have historically been released in February, the scientific community was told ROSES-26 would be available in July 2026, per a NASA announcement made in January 2026.[4] However, the ROSES-26 solicitation was not released in July. Instead, NASA announced on October 20 that the ROSES-27 solicitation would be released in January 2027.[5] In light of repeated delays in the ROSES-26 solicitation release, we urge NASA to maintain the announced timeline for ROSES-27 and follow a regular, predictable cadence of solicitations thereafter.

The lack of clarity concerning the availability of research funding and the associated timelines introduces a volatility that the research enterprise is not designed to handle. Graduate student admissions and postdoctoral hiring take place on an annual schedule, and often require advance knowledge of incoming research funding. Uncertain application timelines, paired with delayed selection notices and slow fund disbursements, directly threaten the next generation of U.S. scientific leaders. To maintain our national leadership in space, we need to offer predictable timelines for funding opportunities that allow us to support and train students and early-career researchers.

We urge NASA to ensure that ROSES-25 award selections are made and funds are disbursed in a timely and predictable manner. NASA should provide the scientific research community with a clear, predictable, and accurate timeline for all future ROSES solicitations, as well as the expected timeline for selection and funding of awards.

Our organizations stand ready to support you in your work to nurture a thriving research enterprise in the Earth and space sciences. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and relevant NASA leadership to discuss the concerns outlined above, and learn how we can be of assistance to you in continuing a successful and critical slate of NASA SMD research programs.

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[4] https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/solicitations/roses-2025/roses-2026-to-be-released-july-2026/

[5] https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/solicitations/roses-2025/nasa-prepares-roses-27-to-advance-american-science-and-leadership-in-space/

Sincerely,

American Astronomical Society
American Geophysical Union
American Physical Society
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Scientific Society for Astrobiology
The Geological Society of America
The Planetary Society
Universities Space Research Association

CC:
Dr. Nicola Fox, Science Mission Directorate Associate Administrator
Dr. Mark Clampin, Science Mission Directorate Deputy Associate Administrator
Dr. Michael New, Science Mission Directorate Director of Research Strategy
Dr. James Kenyon, Research and Technology Mission Directorate Associate Administrator
Dr. Wanda Peters, Research and Technology Mission Directorate Deputy Associate Administrator