

NASA chief defends budget cuts

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NASA Administrator Michael Griffin says budget cuts necessary to pay for future space flights may mean an end to some current space science projects.

Griffin, testifying Tuesday before the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Science on Space, said the gap between retiring the shuttle in 2010 and flying a new manned space vehicle by 2014 must be narrowed to prevent long-term damage to the U.S. space program and national security, The New York Times reported.

He said although all NASA programs have been affected by budget cuts, a major portion of the funding for the development of the new spacecraft comes from reducing the growth of science programs and halting some research, the Times reported.

Griffin told the subcommittee, "I believe that fulfilling our commitments on the International Space Station and bringing the Crew Exploration Vehicle online in a timely manner, not later than 2014 and possibly sooner, is a higher priority than these science missions."

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