

NASA offers support for SNAP project

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NASA announced Thursday it will support an advanced mission concept study for the supernova acceleration probe, or SNAP, mission.

The SNAP experiment was proposed by the Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the Space Sciences Laboratory of the University of California-Berkeley.

Berkeley Lab Director Steven Chu explained SNAP is an experiment designed to learn the nature of dark energy by precisely measuring the expansion history of the universe. At present, scientists cannot say whether dark energy has a constant value or has changed over time -- or even whether dark energy is an illusion, with accelerating expansion being due to a gravitational anomaly instead.

Scientists have called dark energy one of the very most compelling of all outstanding problems in physical science.

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