

# Major scientific programs could be slashed or eliminated under debt-reduction deal

August 5 2011

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The American Physical Society, the nation's leading organization of physicists, is deeply concerned that proposals to drastically reduce the nation's debt would do serious harm to major scientific projects.

APS understand that America must get its fiscal house in order, but the Society also believes that it is important to make wise choices that will create jobs and build a better America.

Under the debt-reduction deal, across-the-board cuts to reduce discretionary spending would mean the cancellation of major scientific projects. In a newly released statement, the APS Executive Board expressed dismay that impending U.S. House action on appropriations for Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies had identified the [James Webb Space Telescope](#) (JWST) as a prime candidate for termination.

APS urges Congress to restore funding for JWST and believes it deserves special attention for the following reasons:

Successor to the extraordinarily successful [Hubble Space Telescope](#) with similar potential to transform astronomy, JWST is the centerpiece of the future American space astrophysics program. It was the highest-ranked mission in the 2000 National Academy of Sciences' Astronomy Decadal Survey and is a cornerstone of the 2010 Survey.

JWST is 100 times more powerful than Hubble and would revolutionize

our understanding of the birth of the Universe, reveal much about the first stars and galaxies, and play a crucial role in the quest to find life on distant planets.

Seventy-five percent of the JWST hardware is being fabricated or has been delivered, and 3.5 billion dollars (about half of the total cost) has been spent. The Casani report, commissioned by Senator Mikulski, found no technical problems and NASA and its contractors have corrected management deficiencies that the report identified.

JWST would continue Hubble's legacy as one of the greatest inspirations for young people and as a symbol of American leadership in science and space. Cancellation of JWST would eliminate thousands of high-tech jobs, especially in the aerospace industry.

The Canadian and the European Space Agencies are contributing around a [billion dollars](#) to JWST; cancellation would again call into question our nation's record as a reliable international partner.

Provided by American Physical Society

Citation: Major scientific programs could be slashed or eliminated under debt-reduction deal (2011, August 5) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-08-major-scientific-slashed-debt-reduction.html>

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