

# Trump's budget would cut NASA asteroid mission, earth science

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President Donald Trump's proposed budget plans to keep building the Orion deep space capsule, pictured launching from Cape Canaveral, Florida in 2014

Under US President Donald Trump's proposed budget, NASA's funding would stay largely intact but the space agency would abandon plans to lasso an asteroid, along with four Earth and climate missions.

The 2018 [budget](#)—which must be approved by Congress—asks for \$19.1 billion for NASA, a 0.8 percent decrease from 2017, allowing the the space agency to emerge unscathed compared to the deep cuts laid out for other federal science and environmental agencies.

The proposal "focuses the nation's efforts on [deep space exploration](#) rather than Earth-centric research," it said.

Plans to keep building the Orion deep space capsule and what will be the world's most powerful rocket, known as the Space Launch System (SLS), remain intact, and are designated to receive \$3.7 billion.

On the chopping block are four Earth science missions, saving around \$102 million.

These include shutting off the cameras on a [deep space](#) climate observatory called DSCOVR that launched in 2015—and was initially a project of former vice president Al Gore—and three other satellites to track global warming and ocean health, and have not yet launched.

The proposed budget also axes a multi-billion plan championed by former president Barack Obama to lasso an asteroid and move it into orbit around the Moon for study in the 2020s.

NASA's \$115 million Office of Education is "duplicative" and would be eliminated, "resulting in a more focused education effort through NASA's Science Mission Directorate," said the [budget proposal](#).

The US space agency would get \$1.9 billion for planetary science, including a mission to fly by Jupiter's icy ocean moon Europa and a Mars rover that would launch in 2020.

"This is a positive budget overall for NASA," said acting administrator

of the US [space agency](#), Robert Lightfoot.

"As with any budget, we have greater aspirations than we have means, but this blueprint provides us with considerable resources to carry out our mission, and I know we will make this nation proud."

Experts said the budget proposal released Thursday acts as a starting point. A more comprehensive budget plan is still in the works and should be ready in the coming months.

The figures must be debated in the House and Senate and sent back to the president for approval.

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