



# Statement on NASA Earth Science

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Presidential Transition Team  
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Delivered by  
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As a nation, we should never underestimate the contribution of NASA to understanding our home planet. Today, on behalf of the Alliance for Earth Observations, I warn that the United States will not successfully navigate the climate crisis without the science and technologies that enabled us to identify the problem in the first place. In this regard, NASA—its science, technology, data visualization, modeling, and applications—has been and will continue to be critical to our nation and the world in meeting the challenges of our ever-changing planet and transition to a green economy.

Over the past year, the Alliance for Earth Observations has been involved with numerous activities to identify high-priority areas of interest for the incoming Administration. For example, we worked closely with the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), the Ocean Leadership Foundation, American Meteorological Society, and others on the transition document, *Advice to the New Administration and Congress: Actions to Make our Nation Resilient to Severe Weather and Climate Change*. Many of our member representatives were active participants in the Earth observations study conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The study report, *Earth Observations and Global Change*, was published in 2008 and provides an excellent summary of the value of Earth observations, an assessment of where this important technology is today, and recommendations for future consideration.

Regarding NASA's Earth science program, the Alliance for Earth Observations recommends:

1. Restoring the exploration of our home planet as a NASA priority.
2. Supporting the establishment of a national, comprehensive Earth observations strategy, of which NASA space-based observations are an essential element.
3. Having NASA play a key role in a national strategic approach to manage and apply environmental information.
4. Implementing the recommendations of the National Research Council (NRC) decadal survey, and urgently commissioning an update to the recommendations that recognizes that research priorities have evolved since 2005; that NASA's Earth science research agenda must remain relevant to ongoing assessments, such as the current NRC's climate change study; and that new and evolving civil as well as national security considerations make it necessary to reassess US leadership in certain technology areas (e.g., space-based radar)
5. Supporting a management approach for NASA that treats individual Earth observing satellites as part of a single system of many complementary missions.
6. Supporting active US leadership in the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), which would include a more prominent role for NASA and the identification of international partnerships to support specific components of Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).
7. Elevating the head of NASA Earth science to the associate administrator level, so that he/she can participate in interagency and international forums at the appropriate level.
8. Supporting enhanced representation from the Earth observing community (government, industry, and academic) on the proposed National Space Council.
9. Establishing a mechanism for greater private sector engagement—to spur innovation and to obtain and understand growing user needs.
10. Continuing NASA's strong and respected leadership in Earth science education.