

Make Your Voice Heard

How to Call Congress to Protect NASA Science

NASA's world-leading science programs face a potential **47% budget cut** in fiscal year 2026. This extinction-level event would decimate American leadership in space, halt critical missions like the Roman Space Telescope, DAVINCI, and Mars Sample Return, waste billions in taxpayer investment, and damage our nation's STEM workforce. Your calls to your elected officials are crucial. This guide helps you make that call effectively.

1. Your call is important:

- **Democracy in Action:** Calling is a direct way to communicate your views to the people elected to represent you. Staffers track call volume and topics – your call adds to the count demanding support for NASA.
- **Personal Touch:** A phone call is more personal than an email. It shows you care enough to take time out of your day.
- **Influence Policy:** Congress controls the "power of the purse". They need to hear from constituents that supporting NASA science is a priority, especially when facing drastic proposed cuts from the White House.

2. Find Your Representatives:

- You have **one Representative** in the House and **two Senators**. Each one will have local offices and offices in the U.S. Capital. Call all three at their Washington, D.C. offices.
- Find their phone numbers using The Planetary Society's online system at planetary.org/action-center Look for the "Call Congress" action.

3. Prepare before you call:

This is an optional step, but recommended to maximize your effectiveness. Doing some prep in advance to ensure you're familiar with the legislator's prior statements

on NASA, space, or involvement in relevant congressional committees can greatly increase your relevance and ensure your message is more impactful.

Here are some tips:

- **Know your legislator:**
 - Search the web for their general stance on science and space exploration. Try searching for “[Legislator Name]” AND “NASA” or “Space”
 - Are they on space-relevant committees? (e.g., House or Senate Appropriations Committees, especially the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittees; House or Senate Space Subcommittees). Use their official websites to find their committee assignments.
 - Are they members of the bipartisan Planetary Science Caucus? Check caucus membership lists.
- **Find Local Connections:** Does your state/district have NASA centers, major contractors, university researchers receiving NASA grants, or active Space Grant programs? Mentioning a local connection makes your call more impactful.
- **Outline your key points (and keep it brief!):**
 - Identify yourself as a constituent (name, city/town/zip).
 - State your purpose clearly: “I urge the Representative/Senator to **oppose the proposed 50% cut to NASA Science** in the FY26 budget and instead work to **restore funding to \$9 billion.**”
 - Pick 1-2 key reasons why this matters *to you* and *to their district/state* (use your research!). Examples: economic benefits/jobs, scientific discovery/inspiration, national leadership/security, the unique role of government in science, a local university’s research, etc.
 - Make a specific ask: “Please tell the Representative/Senator I urge them to reject these cuts and work to restore funding for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate.”

4. Make the call:

- **Use a call script to guide the call**

If you are using The Planetary Society’s “Call Congress” action, we provide you

with a basic call script that outlines key talking points. Otherwise, we recommend you write down a handful of key points in advance that you want to mention. You can reference our [talking points](#) for guidance.

- **Be Polite & Respectful:** You'll likely speak to an intern or staff assistant first. They are your conduit.
- **Ask for the Right Person:** "Could I please speak with the legislative staff member who handles **NASA, space, science, or appropriations issues?**" If they are unavailable, it's okay to leave your message with whoever answers. Clearly state your name, that you are a constituent, and your concise message (purpose, key reason, specific ask).
- **Be Concise:** Aim for 1-2 minutes.
- **Thank Them:** Thank the staffer for their time and for relaying your message.

5. Provide feedback to The Planetary Society

- If you are using our "Call Congress" action, you can provide quick feedback for each congressional office you called. That helps us follow up on your advocacy actions.

6. Personal follow up (Optional):

- If you speak to a topic-specific staffer, ask for their email address and send a thank you note that also reinforces your message
- Send a brief email summarizing your message via the legislator's website contact form and acknowledge that you called.
- Encourage friends and family to call as well.

Thank you for defending NASA science! Your informed voice is powerful.