



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

Reply to Attn. of: SMD/Planetary Science Division

TO: Research & Analysis Proposal Reviewers
for NASA's Planetary Science Division

FROM: Lori S. Glaze, Ph.D., Director Planetary Science Division

DATE: July 7, 2021

I am writing to express my sincere thanks to all those who have served as a peer reviewer for one or more of NASA's Planetary Science Division Research and Analysis (R&A) program review panels since the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Sixteen months ago, the entire world was set in turmoil by the effects of COVID-19. The immediate impact was an enormous strain on everyone. In addition to the psychological strain of a global pandemic, everyone struggled with their own personal challenges, be it children in virtual classes, the absence of day care, family members who needed assistance, or the lack of in-person contact with friends, family, and colleagues. Of course, in too many cases, people are also continuing to deal with the loss of loved ones.

COVID-19 also presented many work challenges. In the planetary science community, labs and offices sat empty; field campaigns and in-person conferences were cancelled or postponed. Meanwhile, we all rapidly had to learn the intricacies of Zoom, Teams, Slack, and other tools that facilitated the switch to a fully virtual working model. For the Research & Analysis programs at NASA, a specific challenge we faced was the move to all-virtual review panels. In the first weeks of mandatory telework, Program Officers scrambled—while dealing with the same personal challenges as everyone else—to figure out how to make virtual reviews work. Their dedication was critical to making virtual reviews successful. But, of equal importance were the contributions of the many reviewers from the planetary science community. Reviewers, like you, readily volunteered their time to participate and were understanding of the challenges faced in this new environment. Despite the challenges, you dedicated your precious time to provide the benefits of your expertise and experience and to thus help uphold the quality of our peer-review process. Feedback from reviewers has also helped us continue to improve the quality and logistics of our virtual review panels.

The peer review process has long been a cornerstone of NASA's research programs, and without your contributions, these programs could not function. Over the past sixteen months, our Research & Analysis program has continued to operate successfully, but only because of your dedication and service. I would like to express my appreciation and admiration for all of you, our reviewers, for the work you have done and the work that you continue to do. The strength of our Research & Analysis program is a reflection of your commitment to our common scientific goals and that commitment presages a continued bright future for Planetary Science.

Thank you,

Lori S. Glaze, Ph.D.
Director Planetary Science Division
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