

Dear Colleagues-

The leadership of SMD recognizes that the COVID-19 epidemic has placed tremendous strain on all of us and our families, disrupting our lives and putting new hurdles in the way of accomplishing our professional goals. Our first priority is the safety of everyone who works on NASA missions and funded research and SMD leadership is committed to doing all it can to support our community. I want to thank all of you for your patience and hard work as we transition to this new normal.

We know that progress on funded research may slow and in some cases even stop due to necessary telework and lack of access to facilities and labs, the closing of public schools and daycare facilities for our children, the transition of teaching activities to on-line classes, and other family obligations. SMD understands this potential outcome of the current epidemic response and will work with the research community and its institutions to mitigate any impacts and to make plans, when possible, for a way forward. This situation will undoubtedly cause some inefficiencies, but we continue to be supportive of any research that can be done remotely.

Last Friday, I hosted a public town hall and wanted to reiterate some of the key messages from that discussion:

- Our priority is everyone's safety and protecting hardware and integrity of data for operating missions
- We are working with each mission and project in detail based on where they are in the development process
- Missions in I&T will continue with the smallest teams possible
- We are anticipating impacts to solicitations and evaluations and will work with the research community to mitigate them
- We encourage all to continue to pay graduate students, post-docs, and lab staff

Audio and charts from the town hall are available for download at <https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/virtual-townhall-2020>. We will also continue to provide updates to the community.

As we work through this unprecedented situation, please keep yourselves and your families safe. The government has established a new informational website, coronavirus.gov, which has useful information, and watch for continued communications from agency leaders about NASA's status and steps you may need to take.

Be safe!

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Zurbuchen, PhD
Associate Administrator, NASA Science Mission Directorate

@Dr_ThomasZ