

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



MAY 30 2013

TO: Associate Administrator for Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate
Associate Administrator for Human Exploration Operations Mission Directorate
Associate Administrator for Science Mission Directorate
Associate Administrator for Space Technology Mission Directorate

FROM: Associate Administrator

SUBJECT: Project Termination Review Procedures

Following the nonconfirmation of the Gravity and Extreme Magnetism Small Explorer (GEMS) mission, it became apparent that there were opportunities to improve our coordination and communication related to project cancellations. NASA does not undertake the nonconfirmation, cancellation, or termination of a project or program lightly and, when we do, we need to ensure that we appropriately communicate these actions with our own senior leadership and our external stakeholders.

Understanding that these are infrequent occurrences and that they will likely involve differing circumstances, I do not intend to levy additional processes or procedures via NASA Procedural Requirements, NASA Policy Directives, or other policy directives. However, in order to ensure that the Agency's senior management is fully and proactively engaged in these actions, I am directing that Decision Authorities (DA) notify the NASA Associate Administrator (AA), the Associate Administrator for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (AA OLIA), and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) prior to initiating any cancellation/termination review. Similarly, if a project is not confirmed to proceed at a Key Decision Point (KDP) review, the DA will notify the AA, AA OLIA, and the CFO prior to making a determination as to whether the project will be terminated or directed to take remedial action. This guidance will be documented in the Project Management Handbook, which is slated for release later this year.

I want to emphasize that this does not in any way imply that you, as a DA, should hesitate to undertake nonconfirmation/cancellation/termination reviews when the situation warrants. We need to remain vigilant about program and project performance and, if we are to maximize the benefit of our limited resources, there may be circumstances where projects should be reviewed for potential cancellation. My intent is to simply make sure we improve our coordination and communication when we undertake these reviews.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Lightfoot".

Robert Lightfoot

cc:
Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices
Center Directors