

to act as the responsible official for all Suborbital Research in the Science Mission Directorate. The designee shall be responsible for the development of short- and long term strategic plans for maintaining, renewing and extending suborbital facilities and capabilities, monitoring progress towards goals in the plans, and be responsible for integration of suborbital activities and workforce development within the agency, thereby ensuring the long term recognition of their combined value to the directorate, to NASA, and to the Nation.

(c) Establishment of Suborbital Research Program

The Administrator shall establish a Suborbital Research Program within the Science Mission Directorate that shall include the use of sounding rockets, aircraft, high altitude balloons, suborbital reusable launch vehicles, and commercial launch vehicles to advance science and train the next generation of scientists and engineers in systems engineering and systems integration which are vital to maintaining critical skills in the aerospace workforce. The program shall integrate existing suborbital research programs with orbital missions at the discretion of the designated officer or employee and shall emphasize the participation of undergraduate and graduate students and post-doctoral researchers when formulating announcements of opportunity.

(d) Report

The Administrator shall report to the appropriate committees of Congress on the number and type of suborbital missions conducted in each fiscal year and the number of undergraduate and graduate students participating in the missions. The report shall be made annually for each fiscal year under this section.

(e) Authorization

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

(Pub. L. 111–267, title VIII, § 802, Oct. 11, 2010, 124 Stat. 2832.)

§ 18383. In-space servicing

The Administrator shall continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that provisions are made for in-space or human servicing and repair of all future observatory-class scientific spacecraft intended to be deployed in Earth-orbit or at a Lagrangian point to the extent practicable and appropriate. The Administrator should ensure that agency investments and future capabilities for space technology, robotics, and human space flight take the ability to service and repair these spacecraft into account, where appropriate, and incorporate such capabilities into design and operational plans.

(Pub. L. 111–267, title VIII, § 804, Oct. 11, 2010, 124 Stat. 2833.)

§ 18384. Decadal results

NASA shall take into account the current decadal surveys from the National Academies' Space Studies Board when submitting the President's budget request to the Congress.

(Pub. L. 111–267, title VIII, § 805, Oct. 11, 2010, 124 Stat. 2833.)

§ 18385. On-going restoration of radioisotope thermoelectric generator material production

(a) Findings

The Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States has led the world in the scientific exploration of space for nearly 50 years.

(2) Missions such as Viking, Voyager, Cassini, and New Horizons have greatly expanded knowledge of our solar system and planetary characteristics and evolution.

(3) Radioisotope power systems are the only available power sources for deep space missions making it possible to travel to such distant destinations as Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Pluto, and beyond and maintain operational control and systems viability for extended mission durations.

(4) Current radioisotope power systems supplies and production will not fully support NASA missions planned even in the next decade and, without a new domestic production capability, the United States will no longer have the means to explore the majority of the solar system by the end of this decade.

(5) Continuing to rely on Russia or other foreign sources for radioisotope power system fuel production is not a secure option.

(6) Reestablishing domestic production will require a long lead-time. Thus, meeting future space exploration mission needs requires that a restart project begin at the earliest opportunity.

(b) In general

The Administrator shall, in coordination with the Secretary of Energy, pursue a joint approach beginning in fiscal year 2011 towards restarting and sustaining the domestic production of radioisotope thermoelectric generator material for deep space and other science and exploration missions. Funds authorized by this chapter for NASA shall be made available under a reimbursable agreement with the Department of Energy for the purpose of reestablishing facilities to produce fuel required for radioisotope thermoelectric generators to enable future missions.

(c) Report

Within 120 days after October 11, 2010, the Administrator and the Secretary of Energy shall submit a joint report to the appropriate committees of Congress on coordinated agreements, planned implementation, and anticipated schedule, production quantities, and mission applications under this section.

(Pub. L. 111–267, title VIII, § 806, Oct. 11, 2010, 124 Stat. 2833.)

§ 18386. Collaboration with ESMD and SOMD on robotic missions

The Administrator shall ensure that the Exploration Systems Mission Directorate and the Space Operations Mission Directorate coordinate with the Science Mission Directorate on an