

10/13/11 PSS Telecon

Committee Members Present: Jim Green (HQ), Sarah Noble (HQ), Ron Greeley (chair), Bill Bottke, Julie Castillo, Tom Cravens, David DesMarais, John Grant, Greg Herzog, Sanjay Limaye, Louise Prockter, Anna-Louise Reysenbach, Chip Shearer, Paul Steffes, Dawn Sumner, Jessica Sunshine, Mark Sykes and Mini Wadhwa

Goal of the meeting:

The purpose of this telecon was to the possible impact of JWST on the PSD budget. Eric Smith, JWST program manager, presented slide, as did Jim Green, followed by an open Q&A.

The next PSS meeting will be a telecon on October 27th from 2-4pm EDT.

Eric Smith:

Eric stressed that JWST will be useful to the planetary community (you can access the exposure time calculator here: <http://jwstetc.stsci.edu/etc/> to see how your favorite object would look). The recent review uncovered no technical issues, though there were significant management shortcomings. As a result, all senior management has been replaced and communications between HQ, centers, and contractors, has improved.

The replan results in an October 2018 launch. To get there, the project will need an additional \$156M in FY12, 50% of that from SMD (but not from Earth Science), 50% from “cross agency support”. It is further anticipated that between FY13 and 16, an additional \$1067M will also be needed.

Jim Green:

Jim began by discussing all the fantastic accomplishments so far, and yet to come, of the “Year of the Solar System” and noted that all is well with MSL, still on schedule to launch Nov 25th.

Jim noted that we are currently under a continuing resolution until Nov 18th. The FY12 President’s request for PSD was \$1540.7M. At the moment, there are two bills floating around congress, both the House and the Senate versions provide about \$1.5B, a ~\$40M delta. The House version does not include JWST, the Senate version does, but in both versions, PSD ends up with roughly the same number. If no decisions are made and the “supercommittee” doesn’t act by Nov 23rd, there will be a 10% across the board cut.

Jim encouraged those listening to stop talking about “someone else’s flagship” and instead start talking about Planetary and all the great things we are accomplishing.

Q&A:

Tom Cravens noted that there is a particular audience that needs to be convinced of the importance of our program, it is certain member of Congress. Ron Greeley agreed, noting that AGU recently sent out a

message to its members about science budgets across the board being cut, and that this might be good ammunition for a discussion with your Congressperson.

Ron asked about how a cost hit from JWST would be apportioned among SMD, noting that Earth Sciences would apparently not be contributing. Jim reiterated that we are still waiting on Congress, but right now the Senate and House versions are about the same with or without JWST. He again noted that it is important for planetary scientist to talk about planetary science. Regardless of JWST, our budget is going down, with as much as a 25-30% loss by 2015. If we don't get out there and talk about our priorities and what will be lost then our budget will continue to go down.

Ron agreed with Jim, noting that the decision makers don't really understand the role of the decadal and it is the community's job to make them understand that the decadal is the community consensus.

Bill Bottke asked if the planetary community would get increased time on JWST commensurate with our contribution. Eric said time will be competed, just as it is on Hubble. Bill asked if we could change the rule, but Jim said that we need to compete.

Louise Procktor asked if descope options and/or earlier launch options had been assessed. Eric noted that there have in fact been numerous descope studies and several have been implemented, but at this point, everything is largely constructed.

Mark asked about increased funds beyond FY12. This is in Eric's slides, from FY13-16 it is estimated to be about \$1067M, or about \$250M/yr, though FY13 is the peak year.

It was asked if PSD had a map of where our money goes by Congressional district. Jim noted that we do have a map of PIs by state (slightly outdated), but he will be happy to provide that. Ron asked if we could make one that included all activities, not just R&A. Jim thought that could be done.

Bethany Johns (AAS) asked about the "notional" budgets in the out years and asked Jim to speculate on whether he thinks we can afford a Mars flagship. Jim said that "notional" means the top line was to be honored, but individual components recrafted based on the decadal. If we had a flat budget, it would be a different program, but right now it goes down and we need to work with that. Stephanie noted that at <http://blog.aas.org/> the budget numbers are laid out.

Ron asked about the status of talks with ESA. Jim noted that both ESA and NASA are spending real money on the '16 mission right now and are discussing the architecture for the '18 mission, but ESA needs a certain level of confidence from the US, which frankly we cannot provide at this time. Both agencies are operating in good faith and are working their hardest. This is different than our previous collaborations, what we are developing is a series of missions. There will be more on the Mars program at the upcoming F2F.

Jonathan Rall was given the action to line up speakers for the F2F.