



JPL WORKERS UNITED (JWU)
BETTER TOGETHER



Dear Director Dave Gallagher,

We are writing to express concern over JPL's layoffs. While the lab is clearly moving through a period of uncertainty, we do not understand how an informed strategy can be made without knowing Congress' budget priorities – something which has continued to evolve over the summer, with a better financial picture emerging in that time. We, the undersigned, call on JPL leadership to explain the strategy behind these layoffs and how they were made without knowing what funding NASA will ultimately provide in 2026.

For the third time in two years, JPL faces harmful workforce cuts. Past cuts seemed arbitrary, eliminating critical roles and creating unsustainable levels of work for those who remained. These unexplained cuts have weakened the lab's unique talent pool at a time when we are trying to navigate a changing landscape for space exploration. We ask that JPL consider alternative solutions to outright job cuts, including voluntary reductions in hours, deferred retirement programs and securing laid off JPLers' right to return to their jobs past the WARN period if additional funding is secured.

Before the government shutdown this month, Congress had proposed restoring much of NASA's science funding, reducing expected cuts from 46% in the President's Budget to 18% in the House appropriations bill, and 0.5% in the Senate appropriations bill [1]. Members of Congress have said that they do not believe layoffs are necessary given the funds they intend to appropriate to NASA [2]. You stated in a previous lab-wide message that JPL received guidance from NASA to plan to a more favorable budget, presumably the House proposal, despite the possibility that the final legislation passed could restore nearly all funding as outlined in the Senate proposal [3].

Furthermore, we know that the Trump Administration is using this government shutdown to further implement its historically unpopular agenda, which includes dismantling public science [4], and is threatening to lay off federal workers [5]. It is concerning to hear you cite the need for the lab to align itself with the new Administration, especially using the rhetoric of "efficiency" to justify workforce cuts [6]. Instead, we urge JPL to partner with us to advocate for increased NASA funding and to prevent OMB from impounding funds in the future rather than complying in advance with the new Administration's agenda.

We call on lab leadership to provide insight into the following:

- **the specific FY26 budget scenario used to determine the number of eliminated positions,**
- **how eliminating positions is expected to increase JPL's efficiency and competitiveness,**
- **the strategic rationale for cuts in specific job families to align JPL with future work,**
- **how new Directorate and Division leaders were chosen for positions, especially without open requisitions,**
- **the specific criteria used to determine who is laid off.**

Like all JPLers, we love this exceptional workplace. We send this letter in the hope of protecting a lab we want to see thrive and live up to its values of being bold, trusted, and inclusive. The lack of communication about the lab's strategic direction is one reason why so many of us are forming a union, which will give JPLers a formal process for requesting this information in the future.

Best Regards,

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Aaron Plave, Software Engineer
Abi Komanduru, Signal Analysis Engineer
Aidan O'Donnell, Software Systems Engineer
Akim Babenko, RF Microwave Engineer
Alan Didion, Systems Engineer
Alex Akins, Technologist
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André Zamorano Vitorelli, JPL Postdoctoral Researcher
Andrew Good, Media Relations Specialist
Armond Sarkisian, Software Engineer
Ashley Stroupe, Operations Systems Engineer IV
Bonnie Buratti, Research Fellow
Brendan Crill, Scientist
Brian Anderson, Mission Design Engineer
Brian Bue, Research data scientist
Camille Martire, Research Technologist
Caroline Coward, Librarian
Cassie Stuurman, Signal Analysis Engineer
Catherine Lally, Information Management Engineer
Celeste Smith, Flight Software Engineer
Charles-Henri Mattei, Visualization developer
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Christophe gauge, Computer Systems Engineer
Christopher Lawler, Systems Engineer
Christopher Petrie, Scientific Applications Software Engineer
Damon Landau, Systems Engineer
David Austerberry, System Engineer
David Coren, Systems Engineer
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Ella Seal, Systems engineer
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Enrique Gamez, CM Engineer
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Ethan Schaler, Robotics Mechanical Engineer
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Jordan Isler, Navigation Engineer
Jordan Ross, PRA
Joshua Flancer, Operations Systems Engineer
Joshua Laughner, Scientist
Julia CrowleyFarenga, Psyche Testbed Lead
Kathryn Yu, Engineering Applications Software Engineer
Kevin K. Lane, Animation Producer
Kimberly Rink, Operations Systems Engineer
Kristine Nguyen, Software Engineer
Kyle Kaplan, Systems Engineer
Lea Harris, Structural Engineer
Leo Cheng, System Engineer
Luis Adrian Ortiz, Sequencing Systems Engineer
Luke Kachelein, JPL Postdoc
Margaret Weisenfelder, Configuration Manager
Margie L. Homer, Technologist
Marguerite Syvertson, Program Area Manager, MEP
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Stephanie Mitana, Mechanical Engineer
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Travis Lee Wagner, Mission Planner
Tunde Demuren, Systems Engineer
Tyler Dawson, Mission Planning
Vatsal Jhalani, Instrument Operations Engineer
Vince Woo, Flight Software Engineer
Vivian Tran, Data Scientist
Walker Dula, Instrument operations Engineer
Willow Coleman, Technologist
Yu Takahashi, Navigation engineer

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2. Representative George Whitesides said this at the UAW 2478 Funding Cuts Town Hall.
3. Video from Dave Gallagher, sent via email on September 23, 2025
4. "The Destruction of NASA's Mission" *US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation*, September 2025.
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