



THE WHITE HOUSE

## **By Establishing a National Strategy for Planetary Protection, the United States Continues to Lead in the Safe and Sustainable Exploration and Commercialization of Space**

**PLANETARY PROTECTION FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: The National Space Council released a strategy to ensure the protection of the Earth and other planetary bodies from harmful biological contamination from space exploration activities.**

- As the United States continues to lead in space exploration and commercialization, national policy must keep pace to accelerate our world-class commercial space sector and scientific enterprise, while appropriately avoiding biological contamination.
- Many aspects of planetary protection policy have not been updated since the Apollo Era and do not reflect the increasing role and capabilities of the private sector.
- Planetary protection against “forward contamination” ensures the validity of potential scientific discoveries in the search for extraterrestrial life.
- Planetary protection against “backward contamination” ensures that the Earth’s biosphere is not adversely affected by the return of potentially hazardous microbes.

**ADVANCING SPACE EXPLORATION LEADERSHIP: The National Strategy for Planetary Protection advances U.S. interests in science and exploration, commercial space activity, and international leadership.**

- This strategy outlines steps to implement direction from the 2020 National Space Policy for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to lead U.S. departments and agencies in the development of planetary protection operational guidelines.
- Meeting the strategy’s objectives will ensure a cohesive national effort that balances scientific discovery, human exploration, and commercial activity in space, while meeting applicable international and domestic obligations.
- The United States will continue to lead in the sustainable exploration of space by appropriately protecting the Earth and other celestial bodies.
- Best practices developed by the United States that account for commercial and international partners will ensure safety, sustainability, and predictability in space for the benefit of all humankind.