

# White House Orders NASA to Destroy Important (Climate) Satellite

"This is illegal."

**The White House has instructed NASA employees to terminate two major, climate change-focused satellite missions.**

As [NPR reports](#), Trump officials reached out to the space agency to draw up plans for terminating the two missions, called the Orbiting Carbon Observatories. They've been collecting widely-used data, providing both oil and gas companies and farmers with detailed information about the distribution of carbon dioxide and how it can affect crop health.

One is attached to the International Space Station, and the other is collecting data as a stand-alone satellite. The latter would meet its permanent demise after burning up in the atmosphere if the mission were to be terminated.

We can only speculate as to why the Trump administration wants to end the missions. But considering president Donald Trump's [staunch climate change denial](#) and his administration's efforts to deal the agency's science directorate a [potentially existential blow](#), it's not difficult to speculate.

Worse yet, the two observatories had been expected to function for many more years, scientists working on them told *NPR*. A [2023 review](#) by NASA concluded that the data they'd been providing had been "of exceptionally high quality."

The observatories provide detailed carbon dioxide measurements across various locations, allowing scientists to get a detailed glimpse of how human activity is affecting greenhouse gas emissions.

Former NASA employee David Crisp, who worked on the Orbiting Carbon Observatories' instruments, told *NPR* that current staffers reached out to him.

"They were asking me very sharp questions," he said. "The only thing that would have motivated those questions was [that] somebody told them to come up with a termination plan."

Crisp said it "makes no economic sense to terminate NASA missions that are returning incredibly valuable data," pointing out it costs only \$15 million per year to maintain both observatories, a tiny fraction of the agency's \$25.4 billion budget.

Other scientists who've used data from the missions have also been asked questions related to terminating the missions.

The two observatories are only two of [dozens of space missions](#) facing existential threats in the form of the Trump administration's proposed 2026 fiscal year budget. Countless scientists have been outraged by the proposal, [arguing](#) it could precipitate an end to the United States' leadership in space.

Lawmakers have since drawn up a counteroffer that would keep NASA's budget roughly in line with this year's.

"We rejected cuts that would have devastated NASA science by 47 percent and would have terminated 55 operating and planned missions," said senator and top appropriator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) in a July statement, as [quoted by Bloomberg](#).

Simply terminating Earth-monitoring missions to pursue an anti-science agenda could be a massive self-own, lawmakers say — and potentially breaking laws as well by overriding existing, allocated budgets.

"Eliminating funds or scaling down the operations of Earth-observing satellites would be catastrophic and would severely impair our ability to forecast, manage, and respond to severe weather and climate disasters," House representative and Committee on Science, Space and Technology ranking member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) told *NPR*.

"The Trump administration is forcing the proposed cuts in its FY26 budget request on already appropriated FY25 funds," she added. "This is illegal."

Article link: <https://futurism.com/white-house-orders-nasa-destroy-important-satellite>