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To: JPL Planetary Science Directorate
Subject: Personal news

Dear Friends,

I am writing today to inform you of an exciting yet difficult decision I have made. On March 28, I will begin a new chapter in my career as the Space Exploration Sector Head of the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. I am looking forward to this new opportunity, but know that I will miss working daily with each of you.

I plan to continue serving as JPL Director for Planetary Science over the next few months. Our work together is too important to not set up a seamless transition. This will also give JPL leadership ample time to plan forward, and hopefully, time for us to see each other again on Lab before my family and I begin this next adventure.

The pandemic has affected all of us. It's given us all a chance to review our priorities, goals, and work-life balance. For me, these past two years have heightened my resolve to focus on family and loved ones. These are areas of my life in which I know I can improve.

I grew up in Maryland, and my father, who worked for 35 years at the Applied Physics Laboratory, has always been my engineering North Star. My Mom (who turns 80 this year) still resides nearby. It was a Johns Hopkins employee scholarship that allowed me to attend the engineering college of my choice. APL has been central to my development as an engineer and a leader.

APL's focus on heliophysics kindles a personal passion which grew while I was at the University of Colorado. In planetary science, APL and JPL are presently working together to enable Psyche and Europa Clipper, and a respected APL scientist served as PI on one of the two recent Discovery proposals submitted by JPL. Through these collaborations, I have renewed engagement with the talented engineers and scientists at APL. Last week, I was honored when APL leadership asked me to lead this group forward. I look forward to building future collaborations between our two Labs.

I have loved working at JPL. I am thrilled with the work we have accomplished together, heartened by the inclusive community we have begun to build, and proud of the strength and stability we have created for the future of planetary science at JPL.

I will always cherish being a part of Perseverance launch, landing and initial surface operations, shattering the Ingenuity goals that any of us imagined possible, creating the first integrated cost, schedule and technical baseline for Europa Clipper (with launch on a CLV in 2024), ushering in a new era of Venus exploration with the competitive selection of VERITAS and VenSAR, working to finalize the plan to launch Lunar Trailblazer in 2023 (two years earlier than previously planned), and gaining a new start for Mars Sample Return with creation of a new NASA program office at JPL. It has been

an exciting and eventful few years for JPL planetary science, a time from which a stable and strong future is assured.

I am also proud of the existing friendships grown and the many new faces that have joined our team. Together, we have built a team that is strong, capable, and significantly more diverse. It has been an honor to work with you, learn from you, support you, and enable your efforts. I know you will continue to focus on our missions while listening, supporting and caring for each other. There is really no ceiling to what the people of JPL can do when we choose to do so.

I am very proud of what our team has accomplished and will never forget our time together. Please continue to listen and care for each other, reach for large goals, and dare mighty things.

All the best,

Bobby