While I’m sorry I can’t be at Vandenberg Air Force Base today, it’s my pleasure to welcome you all to another one of NASA’s amazing earth science launches - the GRACE Follow-On mission to observe our planet’s ever-changing water cycle, ice sheets and crust.

I want to thank the NASA and commercial teams that have gotten us to this point and give a special shout out to the many scientists engineers and technicians who have worked years to make this mission possible.

Your dedication is remarkable and it truly is the kind of spirit that is carrying our space program to new heights all the time.

Our philosophy on Mars has been to follow the water and that has relevance right here on earth as well.

GRACE Follow-On data will provide unique insights into Earth’s changing climate and it will have far-reaching benefits.
to society, such as improving water resource management.

Water is critical to every aspect of life on Earth: for health, for agriculture and for maintaining our very way of life.

This mission showcases a strong partnership between NASA and the German Research Centre for Geosciences while NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory manages the mission for NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington, D.C.

I look forward to seeing many more earth science missions during my tenure as NASA Administrator and working closely with the team as we study my favorite planet: Earth.