

Gaiashield Group



Open Letter to U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space and Technology

RE: Pending Hearing on Responding to the Threat of Asteroid Impact

Honorable Members:

The prospect of building an effective defense against the threat of asteroid impact presents itself as one of those 'journeys of a thousand miles'. And the first tangible step for Government to take in that direction would be the delegation of a qualified Agency to become expertly able to respond to this threat. The path to a defense from asteroid impact, not only for We The People but We The Species, begins with a US National Planetary Defense Agency. The first in a Global Agency of Agencies. This much is not rocket science.

Therefore, the first, if not only, topic of these hearings should be how to best get the President of the United States to simply comply with his own law.

Nearly 5 years ago the 2008 Congress thought the idea of Agency Delegation was a good idea and put it in the 2008 Space Act. The Senate agreed, as did the President who signed it into law: H.R. 6063 2008 NASA Authorization Act: SEC. 804. ESTABLISHMENT OF POLICY.

Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of OSTP shall--

(2) recommend a Federal agency or agencies to be responsible for protecting the Nation from a near-Earth object that is anticipated to collide with Earth and implementing a deflection campaign, in consultation with international bodies, should one be required.

Then, in 2010, with the deadline for this task approaching, the Executive office found itself confused and poorly informed and consequentially uncertain and elected to just kick this can down the road for two more years and sweep the issue under a rug of science.

October 15, 2010 - OSTP Response to Congress on Near-Earth Objects:

<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/library/docsreports>>

The 2010 Senate thought this was still a good idea and reiterated the notion of Agency Delegation in the 2010 Space Act. Congress agreed, as did the President who signed it into law: S. 3729: 2010 NASA Authorization Act: SEC. 808. NEAR-EARTH OBJECT SURVEY AND POLICY WITH RESPECT TO THREATS POSED. (b) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Director of the OSTP shall implement, before September 30, 2012, a policy for notifying Federal agencies and relevant emergency response institutions of an impending near-Earth object threat if near-term public safety is at risk, **and assign a Federal agency or agencies to be responsible for protecting the United States** and working with the international community on such threats.

Unfortunately, on October 1st 2012, not even a second kick of the can this time around...

Now, after the events of February 15 2013 the notion of a dedicated National Planetary Defense Agency should seem like a very, very good idea to everyone... and ASAP.

Given: A) That we appreciate the prospect of asteroid impact as a dire and fearful thing which includes the potential for our Extinction. And B) That we understand this threat to be an existential and randomly occurring perpetual condition. And C) That we do know how much we do not know regarding when the next asteroid impact event will occur and how large it will be we must always consider this to be catastrophic credible imminent threat. Therefore, since we do have the latent technological capability to respond to this threat, then the next step would be to execute our Political Will: codify a National Planetary Defense Policy that we will 'endeavor to deflect these objects as they present themselves to be impending impact threats' and delegate or create a qualified Agency to be prepared to implement it. How can anything less be wise?

We can never know when we will know when the next asteroid on its way to strike Earth will do so in fact. But if we are lucky and somehow do manage that we see it coming, then on that day every man woman and child on the planet; every politician and businessman, and soldier and scientist and rice paddy farmer will expect The-Powers-That-Be to deal with it. On that day, as things stand, The-Powers-That-Be will surely wish that 20 years before 'we see it coming' they had delegated a qualified Agency to become well trained, proficient, experienced and expert in the art of deflecting asteroids... And 20 years 'before we see it coming' could be today.

You are not likely to hear a recommendation for a dedicated National Planetary Defense Agency from the current field of first-time risk management 'experts' in this issue. They would stand to lose their apparent popular authority. For them, such short-term self-interests are better served by portraying the scope and scale of this threat as far smaller than it actually is and easily dealt with on an extemporaneous ad hoc basis after the fact of detecting an impending impact threat.

Gaiashield Group has tried to remind and even provoke the Executive Office into compliance throughout 2012 <<http://DearPOTUS.Com>>: No Joy. Your turn... If you boys in Congress can't find a way to get the President to follow his own law and correct this gross dereliction of duty then it's time for you all to just pack up your carpet bags and go back to the farm. After all, the choice here can only be between NASA and DoD and since the consequence of failure includes the potential for our extinction... choose both! How is this difficult?

If you can not find some way to take this first single step and provide our Nation with a suitable Planetary Defense Agency, then every day, as you roll yourself out of bed, you should ask yourself "Do you feel Lucky... well do ya punk?". Because as things are, the only thing standing between the continued survival of our species and our random Extinction by Asteroid Impact is Good Luck. And Good Luck has never been a reliable survival trait.

Because this threat includes the prospect for our extinction, knowing which asteroid is the next asteroid on its way to strike Earth will always be the most important thing Mankind can ever know. And because we can, deflecting this threat will always be the most important thing Mankind can ever do. And because failure will never be an option, being prepared to respond to this threat will always be the most important thing Mankind can ever be.

At your disposal and convenience in this issue,

A Million Miles A Day,

R. Dale Brownfield
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<<http://Gaiashield.Com>>