

110th CONGRESS

2ND SESSION

H.R./S _____

To formulate and define specific roles and responsibilities amongst various government agencies and other interested parties in the detection, impact response and collision mitigation of Near Earth Objects.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES/IN THE SENATE

_____ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Science/Committee On Commerce, Science and Transportation

A BILL

To formulate and define specific roles and responsibilities amongst various government agencies and other interested parties in the detection, impact response and collision mitigation of Near Earth Objects.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “NEO Detection, Impact Response and Collision Mitigation Planning Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

- (1) Asteroid and comet collisions rank as the most severe natural disasters that can occur.
- (2) The impact of a near earth object (hereinafter NEO) or comet 65 million years ago in the area now known as Yucatan caused the extinction of 75% of all life species at the time, including the dinosaurs.
- (3) Another impact that occurred 35 million years ago in the area of the Chesapeake Bay produced a crater 38 kilometers across, fractured rock to a depth of 8 kilometers and created an enormous tsunami that may have overtopped the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- (4) The impact of a smaller object of about 100 meters in diameter in the Tunguska region of Siberia in 1907 resulted in a blast of between 10-15 megatons, about 1000 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and flattened all the trees in a area half the size of Rhode Island.
- (5) On June 14, 2002 an asteroid the size of a football field traveling at 23,000 miles

per hour passed within 75,000 miles of Earth, well within the orbit of the moon (which is about 240,000 miles away). This object was not seen until three days after it had passed by Earth.

- (6) Estimates of NEO's larger than 100 meters wide or larger put their numbers at 100,000 objects.
- (7) No agency of the United States is currently searching for objects smaller than 1000 meters (one kilometer) in diameter, despite the considerable danger such objects present.
- (8) No impact response scenario exists and no government agency planning and cooperation has been done to set out how to deal with an impact should one occur.
- (9) Efforts to mitigate a potential collision by deflecting or otherwise affecting the object in question have not received the attention, leadership and resourcing and in fact have not progressed beyond the most basic concept stages.
- (10) As a minimum first step toward dealing with the serious challenges presented by NEO's and the potential of an impact, the Federal Government must devise, define and formulate roles and responsibilities of various federal agencies, international organizations, state governments and other interested parties.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS

(TO COME)

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "INTERAGENCY NEO TASKFORCE".

- (a) ESTABLISHMENT.-- The Office of Science and Technology Policy, through the Committee on Science and the Committee on Homeland and National Security of the National Science and Technology Council, shall convene an Interagency NEO taskforce to define the roles and responsibilities of each department and agency of the federal government, including, but not limited to:

1. NASA
2. National Science Foundation
3. National Research Council
4. Department of Homeland Security, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency
5. National Security Council

6. Department of State
7. Department of Defense
8. Office of Science and Technology Policy

(b) **PURPOSE.**-- The purpose of the Interagency NEO Taskforce will be to produce a report that defines roles and delineates responsibilities of the various agencies represented in, but not limited to, the following areas of interest:

1. NEO search, detection and cataloguing, to include objects 100 meters in diameter and above.
2. Impact response scenarios.
3. Collision mitigation, including deflection or destruction of potentially hazardous objects.
4. NEO exploration alternatives, including human and robotic means of gathering extensive information on the characteristics of NEOs.

(c) **TERM.**-- The Office of Science and Technology Policy shall report to the Congress no later than 180 days from the enactment of this legislation.