

107TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 5303

AN ACT

To authorize the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to establish an awards program in honor of Charles “Pete” Conrad, astronaut and space scientist, for recognizing the discoveries made by amateur astronomers of asteroids with near-Earth orbit trajectories.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Charles ‘Pete’ Conrad
5 Astronomy Awards Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PETE CONRAD ASTRONOMY AWARD PROGRAM.**

7 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Administrator of
8 the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (here-
9 after referred to as the “Administrator”) is authorized to
10 establish the Charles “Pete” Conrad Astronomy Awards
11 Program. The Administrator is authorized to contract
12 with the Minor Planet Center of the Smithsonian Astro-
13 physical Observatory (hereafter referred to as the “Minor
14 Planet Center”) to administer the program.

15 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program author-
16 ized by subsection (a) shall be to award outstanding ama-
17 teur astronomers who make asteroid discoveries and to
18 augment asteroid discovery efforts by the Government.

19 (c) AWARD CATEGORIES.—The award program au-
20 thorized under subsection (a) shall consist of 3 categories
21 of awards as follows:

22 (1) FIRST CATEGORY.—An award in the first
23 category shall be presented annually to the amateur
24 astronomer who, using amateur equipment only, dis-
25 covers the largest absolute magnitude new asteroid

1 having a near-Earth orbit during the preceding cal-
2 endar year.

3 (2) SECOND CATEGORY.—An award in the sec-
4 ond category shall be presented annually to an ama-
5 teur astronomer for pre-discovery and recovery ef-
6 forts, including—

7 (A) the discovery of asteroids by an ama-
8 teur as a result of information produced by pro-
9 fessional telescopes or as a result of the ama-
10 teur’s use of time on professional equipment;
11 and

12 (B) efforts to locate newly discovered as-
13 teroids using old images and already discovered
14 near-Earth orbit asteroids that have been
15 “lost”.

16 (3) THIRD CATEGORY.—An award in the third
17 category shall be presented annually to the amateur
18 astronomer, or professional not funded for optical
19 astronomy, who provides the greatest service to up-
20 date the minor planet catalogue. Eligible discoveries
21 may be made by visual, photographic, or electronic
22 means.

23 (d) GUIDELINES FOR AWARDING PRIZES.—General
24 guidelines for the awarding of prizes are as follows:

1 (1) Prizes shall be awarded to the person or
2 group with the greatest contributions as determined
3 by the Minor Planet Center for the second and third
4 categories.

5 (2) The award in the first category shall not be
6 presented for years in which there are no eligible as-
7 teroid discoveries.

8 (3) All awards are reserved for United States
9 citizens.

10 (4) The decisions of the Minor Planet Center in
11 administering the award program are final.

12 (e) ELIGIBILITY.—Individuals are eligible to apply
13 for the awards authorized under this section if the fol-
14 lowing conditions are satisfied:

15 (1) All applicants must demonstrate that they
16 are not funded to use professional telescopes or ob-
17 servations and are acting solely in an amateur ca-
18 pacity.

19 (2) Government and professional astronomers
20 associated with the near-Earth orbit asteroid
21 project, as well as members of their immediate fami-
22 lies, are not eligible for the awards.

23 (f) REGULATIONS.—The Administrator or the Minor
24 Planet Center may prescribe such regulations as may be

1 necessary to implement the program authorized by this
2 section.

3 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
4 are authorized to be appropriated \$10,000 for each of fis-
5 cal years 2003 and 2004 to carry out this Act.

Passed the House of Representatives October 1,
2002.

Attest:

Clerk.

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