

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 912

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.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 25, 2003

Mr. ROHRABACHER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science

A BILL

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”.

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

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

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

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

17 (1) FIRST CATEGORY.—An award in the first
18 category shall be presented annually to the amateur
19 astronomer who, using amateur equipment only, dis-
20 covers the largest absolute magnitude new asteroid
21 having a near-Earth orbit during the preceding cal-
22 endar year.

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

1 (A) the discovery of asteroids by an ama-
2 teur as a result of information produced by pro-
3 fessional telescopes or as a result of the ama-
4 teur's use of time on professional equipment;
5 and

6 (B) efforts to locate newly discovered as-
7 teroids using old images and already discovered
8 near-Earth orbit asteroids that have been
9 "lost".

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

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

19 (1) Prizes shall be awarded to the person or
20 group with the greatest contributions as determined
21 by the Minor Planet Center for the second and third
22 categories.

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

1 (3) All awards are reserved for United States
2 citizens.

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

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

8 (1) All applicants must demonstrate that they
9 are not funded to use professional telescopes or ob-
10 servations and are acting solely in an amateur ca-
11 pacity.

12 (2) Government and professional astronomers
13 associated with the near-Earth orbit asteroid
14 project, as well as members of their immediate fami-
15 lies, are not eligible for the awards.

16 (f) REGULATIONS.—The Administrator or the Minor
17 Planet Center may prescribe such regulations as may be
18 necessary to implement the program authorized by this
19 section.

20 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
21 are authorized to be appropriated to \$10,000 for each of
22 fiscal years 2004 and 2005 to carry out this Act.

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