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John Holdren, Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
725 17th Street, Room 5228
Washington, DC 20502

20 April 2009

Dear Dr. Holdren,

What should the United States be doing in space?

Given the state of the economy, given the uninspiring “back to the moon” rhetoric of the previous administration (“been there, done that”), and given a rare generational transition of launch technologies, the President has an unprecedented opportunity to **reframe the value proposition** for space-based activities.

If we were insanely rich, we could pursue many ventures—moon, Mars, and beyond—that might offer positive returns of scientific understanding and/or national prestige. But instead, we are deeply in debt and suffering, with the rest of the world, through a financial crisis of historical dimensions. And NASA is over budget.¹

In this world, what “vision” for space can be sustained as a shared commitment of the President, Congress, and the American people? NASA and NSF veteran Donald Beattie argues that obtaining consensus for large space programs requires “the potential for **economic rewards** beyond just doing it and the thrill of exploration.”²

Two space resources offer new economic rewards: matter and energy.³ Asteroids offer **mineral wealth; solar energy** can be used to power systems on Earth and in space. Without a new off-planet economic engine, humans in space will never be more than tourists, occasional scientists, and media heroes. What should we be doing in space? We should be building a solid foundation for economic growth.

I urged President-Elect Obama to “**change the focus** of America’s space program **from exploration to resource development**” back in November.⁴ Copies of that letter went to the directors of all NASA field offices, to senators in the states that host those offices, and to the chairs of the Senate and House subcommittees on space.

If you’re interested in this economic perspective, I’d be happy to flesh out the details. **Abundant Planet** is a public benefit, 501(c)3, California corporation. **We promote the development of asteroid resources and their profitable use in space and on Earth.**

Sincerely,

William BC Crandall
President & Director

¹ CBO. The budgetary implications of NASA’s current plans. 15 April 2009.

² Beattie, D. *ISScapades: The Crippling of America’s Space Program*. 2006.

³ Satellite orbits are valuable; but these are well incorporated into the economy.

⁴ AbundantPlanet.org/files/toObama-2008-11-05.pdf