

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Moran, and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

As your subcommittee begins its work on the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), we respectfully ask that the final bill specify that not less than \$320 million for the Near-Earth Object Surveyor Mission (NEO Surveyor).

In 1994, Congress directed NASA to develop a plan to discover, characterize, and catalog at least 90% of 1-km-sized NEOs within 10 years. And in 2005, Congress passed the George E. Brown, Jr. Near-Earth Object Survey Act, requiring NASA to identify at least 90% of NEOs 140-meters in diameter or larger by 2020. Despite these congressional mandates, NASA has not completed a catalog of potentially hazardous NEOs.

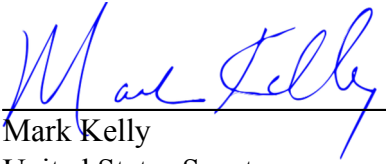
On multiple occasions, the National Academies of Sciences has found that a space-based infrared telescope is necessary to identify all potentially hazardous NEOs. The most recent National Academies of Sciences Planetary Science Decadal recommended that “NASA should fully support the development, timely launch, and subsequent operation of NEO Surveyor to achieve the highest priority planetary defense near-Earth object survey goals.”

NEO Surveyor is a space-based infrared telescope that is optimized for finding, tracking, and characterizing NEOs. NEO Surveyor will discover and label millions of asteroids and comets, including those which closely approach Earth. NEO Surveyor will also provide measurements of the NEOs, and can improve our understanding of their composition, shape, rotational state, and orbit in order to assess the present-day risk of NEO impacts.

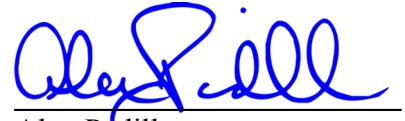
NEO Surveyor is a Category 2 mission per NASA Procedural Requirements and is currently in Phase C, having passed its confirmation review in November 2022. It is aiming to launch in September 2027. The mission is led by Profs. Amy Mainzer and Roberto Furfaro of the University of Arizona, with partners at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, Ball Aerospace in Colorado, the Space Dynamics Laboratory in Utah, Teledyne Scientific & Imaging in California, the California Institute of Technology, and the University of Rochester.

It is critical that our country continue to make progress on planetary defense missions. Thank you for your ongoing work on the Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations subcommittee, and for your consideration of this request.


Sincerely,



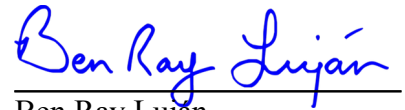
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator

Commerce, Justice and Science Group Letter Table
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ID	Sub	Request Agency or Account	Request Project Name	Request (\$000)
192618	CJS Group	[Title III]/[Science]/[National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)]/[Science]/[Planetary Science]/[Near Earth Object (NEO) Surveyor] [Member Staff] - Sydney Hess sydney_hess@kelly.senate.gov 202-224-4571	Near-Earth Object Surveyor Mission (NEO Surveyor)	\$320,000