

H. Res. 891

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

April 22, 2008.

Whereas the year 2007 represents 35 years of continuous collection of space-based observations of the Earth's land cover by the United States Landsat satellites, which have enabled increased scientific understanding of the interrelationships of the Earth's land cover, energy balance, and biogeochemical processes as well as the realization of numerous societal benefits from the applied uses of the data;

Whereas on July 23, 1972, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched Landsat 1, originally called the Earth Resources Technology Satellite, as the first civilian Earth observation satellite to study the Earth's land cover and monitor natural resources;

Whereas since 1972, the United States Geological Survey has led the data archiving and distribution efforts for the Landsat program, which has continued to collect data without interruption through the successful launches of Landsats 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7, and has established the longest and most comprehensive record of global land surface data ever collected;

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the United States Geological Survey, the Department of

Commerce, the Department of Defense, and the private sector have all played a role in Landsat's history;

Whereas Landsat greatly enhanced remote sensing science, helped give rise to a global change research plan and international initiatives to study the Earth system, and led to new types of careers in engineering and natural sciences;

Whereas Landsat data have been used for multiple scientific and applied purposes including cartography, land surveys and land use planning, agricultural forecasting, water resource management, forest management, mapping of sea ice movement, assessment of tropical deforestation, food security, mineral and oil exploration, and global change research;

Whereas Landsat data are being widely used by Federal, local, county, and State governments, and by foreign nations, nongovernmental organizations, private industry, and universities;

Whereas Landsat data are collected at a scale that enables the study of both natural and human-induced changes in land cover over time and their impacts on the Earth's ecosystems;

Whereas Landsat data illuminated for the first time how human decisions, such as the expansion of cities, led to large-scale impacts on the environment;

Whereas the U.S. Climate Change Science Program has recognized Landsat and its long-term data record as instrumental to the study of climate and environmental change, noting that "Landsat data are invaluable for studying the land surface and how it affects and is affected by climate"; and

Whereas the scientific and societal benefits of the Landsat program and its 35-year data record illustrate the significant return on the public investment in Earth observations and the need for continued support for this critical national asset: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its appreciation to all of the dedicated scientists, engineers, and program personnel who have contributed to the successful development and operation of the Landsat program over the past 35 years;

(2) looks forward to another 35 years of continuous Landsat-like observations of the Earth;

(3) urges the continuation of the Landsat program and data record so as to sustain Landsat's value to scientific research, especially the study of global and climate change, and to the myriad applied uses of the data for societal benefit; and

(4) believes that the Nation should continue to support the research, technological improvements, educational outreach, and development of decision making tools required to expand the use of Landsat data sepa-

rately and as integrated with other Earth observations data.

Attest:

Clerk.