

Nothing short of outright private property rights are required to incentivize humanity to pull itself up and leave its cradle, the Earth.

Can anyone imagine modern life today in which you could not purchase private property, a major source of stability and wealth in modern societies? Why should we have less in space, when the earth is small, finite and fragile, while space is almost infinite? If we want to go to space to work and live and play, space has to pay. Space has not "happened" on the backs of the taxpayers, and will not happen in the future if it is taxpayers who are burdened with government space programs, which by their very nature are complex, slow, inefficient, expensive, and off-target.

Near earth objects and main belt asteroids are lifeless and consist of concentrated natural resources, with an unimaginably large amount of water, the most abundant substance in the solar system and in the universe. Water is the substance of life, the universal solvent, and being oxygen and hydrogen, is the equivalent in space of petroleum on earth. Sustainable space activities need access to concentrated portable energy, just as we do in modern earth-bound societies. When we get to earth orbit, which is energetically half-way to anywhere in the solar system, we are stymied, going in circles, running on empty.

There is no life on most planetary bodies, especially on the millions of asteroids and near earth objects. There will be no need to displace indigenous life forms.

Without property rights and the unfettered ability to own, buy, sell and develop in space, we will be left to smother here in our own wastes, as we continue to deplete and foul the life support system of our unique Spaceship Earth.

The U.S. Congress wisely took a *laissez faire* approach to the development of the Internet, realizing that too many regulations too early in its development cycle could smother it and eliminate a dynamic force that is driving productivity, technology and human knowledge to ever new heights, an important democratizing of access to knowledge. Putting limits and controls on the development of space too early and with too little information could forever doom humanity to be earth-bound.

Nothing short of the encouragement of entrepreneurs to risk their own lives and fortunes will cause space to happen. Why tie one hand behind their backs before such pioneering efforts begin in earnest? Those taking such risks should be able to claim asteroids as their own, upon visiting, assessing and landing on them, at their own, non-subsidized expense. As for planets and their moons, such risk-takers should be rewarded with property ownership embodied in a very small percentage of the planet's surface, surrounding their landing site. This will encourage pioneers to land in the most valuable areas similar to the land rushes in the United States in which people raced to claim free land, and tried to get the best first, but still leaving plenty to those more timid or slower who followed later.

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