To require the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to investigate and promote the exploration and development of space leading to human settlements beyond Earth, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

A BILL

To require the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to investigate and promote the exploration and development of space leading to human settlements beyond Earth, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Space Exploration, Development, and Settlement Act of 2015”.

6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

7 The Congress finds that—
(1) America’s activities in space have challenged mankind to travel beyond planet Earth and have provided us the opportunity to expand human knowledge, to extend the limits of human consciousness, and to improve the human condition;

(2) Section 217(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1989 states, “The Congress declares that the extension of human life beyond Earth’s atmosphere, leading ultimately to the establishment of space settlements, will fulfill the purposes of advancing science, exploration, and development and will enhance the general welfare.”;

(3) numerous independent commissions, chartered by Congress or established by the President, have declared space settlements as a long-range objective of the American space program;

(4) exploring, developing, and settling new physical areas are parts of our heritage and will most assuredly be parts of our future;

(5) United States space policy requires long-range goals and strategic direction in order to provide context for near-term space projects and programs;
(6) increasing awareness of planetary-scale existential risks to human civilization and the survival of the species make it prudent to develop a means to diversify the human population beyond Earth;

(7) the development of space will create new jobs, catalyze new industries, accelerate innovation and new technologies, and enable America to tap vast new resources that will generate new wealth, enhance national security, and provide Americans with new and limitless opportunities;

(8) the establishment of space settlements will inspire generations of future Americans;

(9) the human settlement of space is fully consistent with the policies and objectives articulated in the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958;

and

(10) the adoption of a “pioneering” orientation by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is an essential step toward enabling the establishment of space settlements.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ACT.

(a) DECLARATION OF POLICY AND PURPOSE.—Section 20102 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—
(1) by redesignating subsections (d) through (h) as subsections (e) through (i), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection:

“(d) EXPLORATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND SETTLEMENT OF SPACE.—The Congress declares that expanding permanent human presence beyond low-Earth orbit in a way that enables human settlement and a thriving space economy will enhance the general welfare of the United States and requires the Administration to encourage and support the development of permanent space settlements.”;

(3) in subsection (e), as so redesignated by paragraph (1) of this subsection, by inserting after paragraph (9) the following new paragraph:

“(10) The expansion of permanent human presence beyond low-Earth orbit in a way that enables human settlement and a thriving space economy.”;

and

(4) in subsection (i), as so redesignated by paragraph (1) of this subsection, by striking “to (g)” and inserting in lieu thereof “to (h)”.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 20103 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—
(1) by inserting, in paragraph (1)(D), “and development” after “exploration”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) Space settlement.—The term ‘space settlement’ means any community of humans living beyond Earth’s atmosphere that is able to economically sustain its population through a neutral or positive balance of trade of goods and services, and is able to expand its habitable real estate as need and desire of the community may warrant and international law permits.”.

SEC. 4. SPACE SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) Space Development and Settlement Information.—Consistent with the national security interests of the United States, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall, in close cooperation with other appropriate agencies, the private sector, academia, and the international community, obtain, produce, and provide information relating to all issues important for the development of a thriving space economy and the development and establishment of human space settlements.

(b) Report.—Once every two years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit a report to the President, the Committee on Science,
Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives, 
and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transpor-
tation of the Senate which describes the progress made 
toward expanding permanent human presence beyond low-
Earth orbit in a way that enables human settlement and 
a thriving space economy.

(e) METRICS.—The National Aeronautics and Space 
Administration shall, as part of its first report as required 
by subsection (b), include one or more metrics by which 
to determine progress made toward space settlement 
against which all subsequent reports as required by sub-
section (b) shall be compared. The metrics may be revised 
as appropriate over time to reflect emerging technological, 
economic, and other trends.

SEC. 5. REVIEW OF NATIONAL SPACE POLICY AS IT MAY RE-
LATE TO SPACE SETTLEMENT AND A THRIV-
ING SPACE ECONOMY.

It is the sense of Congress that the President should 
conduct a review of national space policy to incorporate 
as a long term goal of the human spaceflight and explo-
ration program to expand human presence beyond low-
Earth orbit in a way that will enable human settlement 
and a thriving space economy.