



Report Overviews

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Viability of Privatization

Congressional Research Service
"An Overview of NASA's Mission to Planet Earth"
March 1, 1995

"Despite the many commercial uses for remotely sensed information, the Government is still the largest consumer of complex scientific information such as MTPE data. With launch vehicle and spacecraft development costs still high, it is difficult for private firms to recoup their investments by selling data that their spacecraft collect. Thus few private businesses have built and launched scientific spacecraft without government support. While the future cost of access to space potentially could be significantly reduced by using new launch vehicle technology, this is probably 10 to 15 years away. Moreover, it likely will take a considerable amount of time before industry is willing to undertake technical projects with such high financial risks as building and launching spacecraft without significant government support."

Need for Unpoliticized Research

George C. Marshall Institute
Letter to Chairman Robert S. Walker
May 31, 1995

"We recommend that the bottom-line issue to be discussed are twofold: first, a stable base of unpoliticized research funding so that scientists can make long-term plans and second, research focused on the three greatest sources of uncertainty in current estimates of global climate change..."

Mission to Planet Earth Program

National Academy of Sciences
"A Review of the US Global Change Research Program and NASA's MTPE/EOS
1995

"Based on a series of reviews, the program has evolved from its original plans to a reshaped program that is more responsive to the science, more resilient, and more open to the introduction of new technology. There has been a shift from a fixed series of large-vehicle missions to a mixed fleet exploiting small to medium class spacecraft. However, any further structural changes to the near-term EOS missions would cause severe program dislocations. Further budgetary reductions or imposed constraints on technical options could require the elimination of key sensors, slips in schedule, loss of data continuity, and the elimination of advanced technology development that could enhance future research and lower costs."