Covering note for Nature:

I wrote this review because NASA haven’t responded to public comments raising major issues with their draft EIS. NEPA say to contact the agency to resolve issues, but NASA’s planetary protection office didn’t respond to my email. I encourage you to contact them and ask for answers to these questions.

If you also get no reply, I hope you can consider publishing this short review of central points of the literature on planetary protection for a Mars sample return that NASA’s EIS didn’t consider, together with suggestions for ways to keep Earth 100% safe while increasing the science return of these missions.

The aim is to draw attention of space agencies to their obligations to protect Earth, and the latest knowledge about what needs to be done, and to help ensure the public gets to comment on scientifically credible impact assessments.

### The plan is to submit this for a Nature review. I know the bar is high for those. However it would encourage Nature editors to ask questions of NASA and if NASA don’t respond to Nature, and ignore their questions, as seems likely, then it surely is of public interest and they would likely run it.

### While if NASA do respond, maybe we can get some progress. This is what Nature say about Reviews, for authors:

### Reviews

* They focus on one topical aspect of a field rather than providing a comprehensive literature survey.
* They can be controversial, but in this case should briefly indicate opposing viewpoints. They should not be focused on the author's own work. Language should be accessible, novel concepts defined and specialist terminology explained.
* They are peer-reviewed, and are substantially edited by Nature's editors in consultation with the author.
* All Reviews start with a 200-word maximum preface, which should set the stage and end with a summary sentence. Please note that the preface will also appear on PubMed and Medline, so it is important that it contains essential key words.
* Reviews vary in length depending on the topic and should not generally be more than 9 pages long. As a guideline, most reviews should include no more than 150 references. Display items and explanatory boxes (used for explanation of technical points or background material) are welcomed. As a guideline, 5000 words, 4 moderate display items (figures/tables/boxes) and a modest citation list (no more than 150 references) will occupy 9 pages.
* Highlighted references: for Review and Perspective articles, please write a single sentence, in bold text, beneath each of what you consider to be the most important or relevant 5 to 10 per cent of the references in your list, to explain the significance of the work.
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### **Titles**

Titles do not exceed two lines in print. This equates to 75 characters (including spaces). Titles do not normally include numbers, acronyms, abbreviations or punctuation. They should include sufficient detail for indexing purposes but be general enough for readers outside the field to appreciate what the paper is about.

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