

Lockheed Martin Responds To The FY2011 NASA Budget Proposal To Cancel Orion

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Lockheed Martin today released the following statement regarding the FY2011 budget request to cancel the Orion Project as part of NASA's Constellation Program:

We are keenly disappointed in the Administration's budget proposal for NASA that would cancel Project Orion as part of an elimination of NASA's Constellation Program. Orion's maturity is evident in its readiness for a first test flight in a matter of weeks. In fact, Orion can be ready for crewed flights to low Earth orbit and other exploration missions as early as 2013, thus narrowing the gap in U.S. human space flight capability when the shuttle is retired later this year.

Significant investment has already been made by the nation and private industry in Orion, which is human rated to provide a level of safety unmatched by any previous or currently proposed crewed vehicles. Nearly 4,000 people at more than 500 commercial companies and hundreds of small business suppliers across the country have worked diligently on the Orion project to support the nation's human space flight efforts. New facilities have been built and others upgraded. Innovative technologies such as a launch abort system, autonomous rendezvous and docking, closed-loop life support systems, state of the art solar power and avionics systems have been incorporated. And the next-generation of engineers, scientists, teachers and students, so critical to America's future, has been inspired. Cancellation of Orion would sacrifice these capabilities and accomplishments.

The President's budget proposal will, of course, be reviewed by Congress and ultimately will require Congressional approval. As the budget process moves forward, Lockheed Martin is committed to working with Congress, the Administration and NASA to ensure a safe, viable and robust space exploration program that does not cede U.S. leadership in space.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation reported 2009 sales of \$45.2 billion.

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