



In 2004, the Space Exploration Alliance (SEA) was formed to support the Vision for Space Exploration. Unfortunately, the Constellation Program, which was designed to produce the hardware necessary to implement the Vision, never received the funding required to achieve its objectives. The Obama Administration has now proposed a radical departure from the Constellation Program. The proposal calls for the cancellation of the Constellation Program and its Ares I and Ares V launch vehicles as well as the Orion spacecraft and Altair lander, and instead calls for increasing private sector investment, international cooperation, and technology development for human space flight transportation and for increasing support for robotic science missions and other important projects. Embracing the “Flexible Path” concept, suggested by the Committee to Review U.S. Human Spaceflight Plans (the Augustine Committee), the new program recognizes the necessity for a heavy lift deep space launch vehicle to allow us to eventually send humans to explore a multitude of destinations in our solar system. Congress and the Administration need to work together to determine the best path forward relative to our space program, including how best to maintain a skilled work force and how best to leverage the necessary partnership between the public and private sectors relative to launch capabilities. SEA applauds the Administration’s desire to begin human exploration of the solar system as well as for embracing these other valuable initiatives. **However, the new plan has yet to clarify some mission critical details.** To create a program that will be sustainable, efficient, and inspirational to the American public, we urge that the following concepts be emphasized as NASA works with the Congress to develop the details of the new plan:

- 1. Destinations:** NASA administrator Charles Bolden recently stated that human exploration of Mars should be the ultimate goal of the human space program. He also mentioned that we will first need to go to intermediate destinations. SEA enthusiastically supports the goal of sending humans beyond low Earth orbit, and calls on NASA to select these intermediate destinations within the next year. By doing this, the program will have the necessary focus and will have a far greater chance of mission success.
- 2. Timelines:** SEA believes that the Administration and NASA also need to establish firm timelines over the next year for building a **heavy lift vehicle** and should aim to send humans to an intermediate destination **beyond low Earth orbit within the next ten years and to Mars by no later than 2030.** By doing this, we will gain valuable knowledge and keep the country, and our skilled workforce, fully engaged in the program.
- 3. Constellation:** Constellation developed numerous technologies and still is working on programs that could advance the new space program and accelerate development of a heavy lift vehicle. We ask the Congress, NASA, and the Administration to utilize as many of these technologies as appropriate.

4. Technology Review: SEA supports the new focus on research and development of new enabling technologies, such as advanced propulsion. However, to keep these technologies focused we call on NASA to define and prioritize the most important technology concepts to enable new achievements advancing human space exploration.

If it is to succeed, this new path will require a sustained, generational commitment to NASA's long-term mission. It will also require incentives for private sector and international participation. SEA is aware of the financial constraints under which the U.S. government will be operating in the next few years. Tax dollars should be spent wisely, which is why we are making these requests. The Space Exploration Alliance looks forward to working with Congress, NASA, and the Administration to guarantee that the United States remains a leader in space exploration and will truly be able to begin to explore the solar system.

The Space Exploration Alliance is a partnership of the nation's premier non-profit space organizations, with a combined membership of more than 700,000 people throughout the United States and from all walks of life. The members of SEA believe that a strong and focused space exploration program is a compelling national priority that is technically and fiscally achievable, will inspire the nation's youth and the public, will reinvigorate the traditional aerospace workforce and industrial base, and will foster job-creating entrepreneurial activity across the entire economy. For more information on the SEA, visit www.spaceexplorationalliance.org.

