



News release

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[Sen. Hutchison instrumental](#)

BAHEP president commends NASA decision

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – NASA announced on May 24, 2011, that America’s next generation spacecraft, the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle which will replace the space shuttle orbiters entering retirement, will be based on designs and ongoing development by Lockheed Martin Corp. The new spacecraft, to be known as the Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle (MPCV), will venture beyond low-Earth orbit into deep space carrying a crew of four astronauts on 21-day missions. Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, stated, “For more than two years, Lockheed Martin has exceeded expectations by staying on schedule and under budget while meeting major milestones that included a successful test of the launch / abort system. Why wouldn’t NASA continue down this proven path until completion?”

Mitchell added, “This decision by the NASA administrator was the right thing to do. Hundreds of jobs have been saved in the aerospace sector and in the many small businesses that support this nation’s space program. The NASA Reauthorization Act that was signed last year by the president supported the continuation of the Orion program. This was a common sense decision that should have been made months ago, and its delay has adversely affected many people who have dedicated their lives to space exploration. However, it’s good to see that the law is finally being followed, and we owe U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) a great deal of gratitude. New life has been given to the Orion / MPCV program due in no small part to her tenacity and dedication to the space program and the people of Texas.”

Sen. Hutchison is the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. She negotiated the bipartisan compromise NASA Reauthorization in 2010,

directing NASA to continue work on the Orion capsule as a deep space exploration vehicle. Following the announcement, she said, in part, “NASA needs to follow this important step by quickly finalizing and announcing the heavy lift launch vehicle configuration so that work can accelerate and the requirements of the law can be met.” Mitchell strongly supports the senator’s statement and added, “We at BAHEP will work closely with Sen. Hutchison and her staff to ensure that this is accomplished sooner than later.”

Lockheed Martin Corp. has said that it plans to achieve Orion / MPCV initial crewed operations by 2016, which is in keeping with the NASA Reauthorization Act of 2010.

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The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership is a member-driven organization that provides the leadership to stimulate regional economic development and employment in southeast Texas. Its members include more than 260 investor companies, business professionals, local governments, and educational institutions encompassing 13 cities, Galveston and Harris counties, and the Port of Houston Authority. Visit www.bayareahouston.com.

Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program is administered by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. It is a State of Texas funded initiative designed to transfer the knowledge and technology of the U.S. Space Program to small businesses to solve technical challenges they are unable to solve themselves. Visit www.spacetechnologies.com/bahep.