

Charles Bolden, NASA Administrator

Remarks As Prepared:

Space Transportation Association Luncheon

Rayburn House Office Building

December 5, 2011

- Thank you Rich [Coleman] and thank all of you for being here.
- I also want to thank Representative Steve Palazzo for joining us today.
- I want to begin by joining all of you in expressing my gratitude to Lynn [Cline] and Karl [Stehmer] for your years of devoted service to NASA. You have been an important part of our success and we wish you all the best as you begin a new chapter in your lives.

- These are exciting times for the aerospace industry and especially for us at NASA.
- I want to give you a brief overview of our activities over the past year and tell you a little bit about our plans for 2012.
- First, since we are here on Capitol Hill, I want to start by saying how very pleased we are that a few weeks ago a congressional conference committee passed a 2012 budget resolution that included funding for NASA at the level of \$17.8 billion, pretty close to the President's request.
- This comes on the heels of the agency receiving a clean financial audit for the first time in nine years and it sends a clear message to Congress and the American public that we are good stewards of their money.
- I am also pleased to report that NASA was recently named one of the best places to work in government. We came in

at number five. That is very good – but we won't be satisfied until we are number one.

- I am also proud that one of our employees, Matthew Ritsko, who works at Goddard Space Flight Center, won the 2011 Presidential SAVE award for coming up with the most innovative idea in the federal government for saving money and working more efficiently.
- I start with all of these achievements because even though people think of NASA as a technical agency that does amazing science, it is good management, great people, and innovative ideas that are the backbone of our success.
- This brings me to our programmatic accomplishments over the past year.
- As you know, in July, we witnessed the successful conclusion of NASA's 30-year Space Shuttle Program. That

was an extraordinary human accomplishment and many of you were part of it.

- Our Shuttle astronauts helped construct the International Space Station, the largest and most complex international science project in history.
- The International Space Station (ISS) has been operating in space for over 11 years, with crew living and working onboard 24/7. We are carrying out research relevant for life on Earth, which will also prepare us for future human exploration.
- The Station also serves as a platform to demonstrate new technologies and operations concepts.
- It is an economic engine, serving as the initial destination for the commercial sector to provide space transportation for cargo in the near-term and for crew by the middle of this decade.

- The ISS will be the centerpiece of our human spaceflight activities until at least 2020, and the research and technology breakthroughs aboard ISS will facilitate our travel to destinations beyond low Earth orbit.
- We recently signed a Space Act Agreement with a non-profit – located on the Space Coast – to manage the U.S. portion of the International Space Station.
- Now, with the support of the President and Congress, NASA has made a renewed commitment to human spaceflight, and we are taking the necessary – if difficult – steps today to ensure America’s pre-eminence for years to come.
- We recently announced the development of a new Space Launch System (SLS) – a heavy lift rocket that will take our astronauts farther into space than ever before.

- Coupled with the work already occurring on a new Orion multi-purpose crew vehicle (MPCV), this represents a milestone moment in NASA history.
- In parallel with the SLS/MPCV development, we continue to invest in and develop high priority technologies like cryogenic propellant fluid handling that are critical in the evolution of human space exploration.
- We are now poised to take the next great leap into deep space exploration, while at the same time creating good-paying U.S. jobs, and providing the cornerstone for America's future human spaceflight efforts for decades to come.
- Our destinations for humans beyond Earth remain ambitious: the moon, asteroids and Mars.
- We are hiring new astronauts for these missions.

- On November 4th, I had the pleasure of attending the graduation of nine new NASA astronauts in the Class of 2009 at the Johnson Space Center.
- As the first post-Shuttle graduating class, they represent the future of NASA and have been trained for travel to the International Space Station as well as other possible long-duration missions.
- On November 15th, we opened recruitment for the next class of astronauts who will begin their initial training in 2013. These may be the first astronauts to leave footprints on the surface of Mars.
- So, human spaceflight is alive and well at NASA.
- In addition, NASA Science continues unabated.
- On November 26th, from Cape Canaveral, we launched the most advanced mobile robotic laboratory ever built on an 8-month mission to Mars.

- Aptly named “*Curiosity*”, this rover, the size of a Volkswagen Beetle, will land on the surface of the Red Planet next August and begin seeking answers to the planetary puzzle about life on Mars.
- This is a precursor to sending humans to Mars in the 2030’s.
- We are also continuing work on the follow on to the Hubble Space Telescope, the world’s next generation space observatory, the James Webb Telescope (JWST).
- The most powerful space telescope ever built, Webb will observe the most distant objects in the universe, provide images of the very first galaxies ever formed, and study planets around distant stars.
- Other science missions underway include *Juno* to Jupiter and *Grail* to the Moon. *Dawn’s* orbit of a giant asteroid, Vesta, and *MESSENGER’s* unprecedented data from Mercury is just beginning to be analyzed. We’ll continue to undertake these world-class science missions to observe our

planet, reach destinations throughout the solar system and peer even deeper into the universe.

- We'll advance aeronautics research, in partnership with other agencies, to create a safer, more environmentally friendly and efficient air travel network for the Next Generation Air Transportation System, or NextGen.
- We will continue to inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and astronauts through our continued focus on STEM education initiatives.
- Finally...and let me be clear about this: We're committed to having American companies, with sufficient oversight to ensure human safety, send our astronauts and cargo to the International Space Station, rather than continuing to outsource this work to foreign governments.
- This will allow us to focus on deep space exploration. This new approach to getting our crews and cargo into orbit will

create good jobs and expand opportunities for the American economy.

- So, the debate about NASA's direction is over!
- We're moving out and we're moving fast on the ambitious new direction our nation's leaders have given us – developing new technologies; developing partnerships; providing opportunities for competition and innovation; and looking for ways to get the most mileage out of all of the hard work underway in the fields of engineering, science, aeronautics, and technology.
- We look forward to strengthening our partnerships with all of you as we take this next big leap in space exploration.
- Thank you. And now I would be happy to take your questions.