



Masten Space Systems Briefing for NASA Transition Team

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Masten Space Systems (MSS) is an aerospace R&D company creating reliable and reusable rocket vehicles and components. The company is focusing on regeneratively cooled bipropellant propulsion systems and fully reusable vertical takeoff and landing launch vehicles that provide drastically reduced operational costs and very rapid turnaround times. The markets that MSS plans to develop are more commercial in nature than the historically government dominated, non-comsat markets of the past.

MSS would like to communicate the following five points to the NASA Transition Team:

Continued Support for the Suborbital Science Program

MSS believes that the emerging commercial suborbital launch industry can significantly increase the scientific return of microgravity, heliospheric astronomy, and aerospace research and testing missions without increasing costs. This program should be embraced and expanded. One key aspect of this is allowing for the existing Human Tended Suborbital Science responses to include non-human-tended missions since many launch providers can fly in unattended mode.

Clarification of Commercial RLV Launch Services Procurement Directives

As the commercial sector begins offering payloads on a “retail” basis, NASA’s launch procurement processes should be updated to reflect this by allowing launch services to be procured directly from the GSA list. Current SOMD directives prevent this. A standardized and open procurement process for launch services enables parts of NASA not considered part of the Suborbital Sciences Program (education, testing, etc) to acquire low cost launch services without significant overhead.

Encouraging Large and Small Business Partnerships

MSS believes that NASA and the country can greatly benefit from partnerships between large aerospace primes and small, entrepreneurial space companies. In particular NASA could encourage partnerships that “wrap” technologies and services from these smaller companies with the confidence building analysis and modeling that NASA’s processes require. Many of these smaller companies have made a conscious choice not to sell to NASA due to existing contracting and analysis overhead. Larger aerospace companies are well suited to deal with that overhead and act as a buffer between government procurement practices and how small businesses operate.

Renewed Focus on Fundamental Aerospace Technology Research

NASA should re-energize its efforts around fundamental research on space exploration technologies such as on orbit propellant storage, settling and transfer, fuel depots, and power transmission and storage.

Cislunar Infrastructure as a Component of U.S. Space Exploration Policy

MSS also suggests that NASA reexamine the role of on-orbit cislunar infrastructure such as fuel depots, lunar cyclers, and reusable lunar landers as a means to decrease cislunar exploration costs over time and to create analog infrastructure for reducing risk and costs for human missions to Mars.