

NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY CONGRATULATES NASA, BLUE ORIGIN FOR LUNAR LANDER SELECTION

Second Human Landing System Contract Encourages Competition and Innovation

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, FL, USA, May 22, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Space Society congratulates Blue Origin of Kent, Washington for their selection by NASA to develop a second human lunar landing system (HLS) by the end of the decade. The first HLS contract went to SpaceX in 2021, followed by a second award of an HLS flight to SpaceX in 2022. While NASA had always planned to contract for a second lander, the May 19 announcement of the selection of Blue Origin and their industry partners, Astrobotic, Boeing, Draper, Honeybee Robotics, and Lockheed Martin, was a welcome one.



The Blue Origin team's HLS lunar lander. Credit: Blue Origin

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Dale Skran, National Space Society COO

NSS COO Dale Skran said, "The selection of Blue Origin and their partners to design and build a second fully reusable human lunar landing system introduces both competition and innovation into the Artemis program, and that's a huge plus. We are incredibly excited to see Blue Origin and NASA committing to a second system where all the components may be refueled in space, potentially greatly lowering costs over time for many other projects."

The \$3.4 billion fixed-price contract was announced by Jim Free, NASA Associate Administrator for Exploration Systems Development, last Friday. Terms are similar to the earlier contract to SpaceX in that the cost of development

is capped and the industry team will be expected to invest their own money in the project.

Development will start immediately, with uncrewed "pathfinder" missions to practice lunar landings to begin as early as 2024. "[This] is a forward-thinking solution to mature key low-TRL technologies, allowing for incorporation [of] any changes into the final design," Free said in a written statement, adding, "there is no financial impact to NASA because the pathfinder missions are being funded by Blue Origin."

While design and testing will begin this year, Blue Origin's lander is not expected to carry a human crew until the flight of Artemis 5, late in this decade. Although the current contract requires only that the company demonstrate precision landing techniques with the uncrewed prototype, Blue Origin has committed to building and testing the full lander system, including life support technologies. Free added that "using a fully matured crewed lander configuration for the UFT (uncrewed flight test) is another compelling aspect of the technical proposal—it is a significant strength that is highly advantageous to NASA because it will decrease risk to the crewed demonstration mission."

[The NSS](#) strongly supports not just the return of humans to the Moon, but the development of a sustainable cislunar infrastructure enabled by private industry in partnership with NASA. Multiple contracts such as this, which encourage competition and will therefore ultimately lower costs while providing multiple pathways to success on the Moon, are critical to the goals of the NSS.

The National Space Society was founded in 1987 via a merger of the National Space Institute and the L5 Society. The NSS is the preeminent citizen's voice on space exploration, development, and settlement. To learn more about the NSS and its mission to establish humanity as a spacefaring species, visit us on the web at space.nss.org.

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