Sea Launch Stands Behind the Reliability of the Block DM

In response to several inquiries and considerable press speculation, Jim Maser, president of the Sea Launch Company, LLC, today reiterated the company's confidence in using the Block DM-SL upper stage as part of the successful Sea Launch system.

"Sea Launch is concerned about the broader implications of the recent Proton failure to the aerospace satellite and insurance markets," Maser said. "However, speculations regarding Sea Launch switching from our proven Block DM-SL upper stage are completely inaccurate. Sea Launch stands behind the highly reliable RSC Energia-built Block DM-SL, which has a 100% success rate on the Zenit-3SL since 1999.

"In fact, the Block DM family is one of the most proven and reliable stages in history, with a demonstrated success rate of 97% in 218 flights since 1974. It has a consecutive string of 43 successful missions over the last five years. Sea Launch customers and partners are completely confident that appropriate corrective actions will be implemented and that another long string of successes will follow."

Sea Launch uses a Block DM-SL upper stage on its Zenit-3SL vehicle. The Block DM-SL is a derivative of the Block DM-3, which is used with the Proton vehicle. As a result of an apparent anomaly in the operation of the Block DM-3 during the Astra-1 mission last week, that spacecraft failed to reach orbit.

"We are monitoring the investigation of the failed Astra-1 mission as it progresses, within the bounds of Export Compliance, Maser said. "We are confident the investigation team will determine the root cause and implement necessary corrective actions in a timely manner."

Sea Launch Company, LLC, based in Long Beach, Calif., provides reliable, cost-effective, heavy lift launch services for commercial satellite customers. The Sea Launch partners include Boeing, RSC Energia, SDO Yuzhnoye/PO Yuzhmash and the Kvaerner Group. Established in 1995, Sea Launch has a current backlog of 17 firm launch contracts. As the world's only services provider launching from the Equator, Sea Launch offers the optimal starting point for spacecraft heading to Geostationary Orbit. For additional information, visit the Sea Launch web site.

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