Boeing Statement on President's Remarks and the Need for Immediate Development of a Heavy-lift Vehicle

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla., April 16, 2010-- Speaking at NASA's Kennedy Space Center on April 15, U.S. President Barack Obama unveiled proposed changes to the administration's fiscal year 2011 budget submission for space exploration, including a crew rescue vehicle and a decision on a heavy-lift rocket in 2015. The Boeing Company responded today with the following statement:

"The president's enthusiasm for space exploration was encouraging. We are pleased that the president remains committed to human spaceflight. We remain convinced that America stands at an inflection point with regard to space: If we make the right decisions today, we have the opportunity to create a new Golden Age of Space. Our national leadership's focus on this bodes well for our country and its highly experienced space industrial base.

"Boeing has served as a major partner in humankind's exploration of space since the beginning. Our talented people bring a mature understanding of NASA's enduring needs; a practical, businesslike approach to innovation; and a commitment to mission assurance and the safety and success of our astronaut corps.

"We are encouraged by the extension of the International Space Station program and look forward to enhancing scientific research onboard, upgrading the space station, and using it as a U.S. national laboratory. Benefits to be gained from extension of the space station include international cooperation; medical and pharmaceutical advancements; its use as a test bed for demonstrating Earth-observation capabilities and future exploration technologies; and the availability of a waypoint for future exploration missions.

"Excellence in human spaceflight is an important part of the American identity and symbolizes global leadership on the highest of technological platforms. We are greatly concerned that by backing away from the challenges of human space exploration, the United States would relinquish its leadership of a mission that has inspired generations.

"A bold national space program also supports the United States' security and economy by fostering a domestic work force that is educated and skilled in science, technology, engineering and math. It encourages the growth of new technologies and emerging businesses, large and small.

"We support the president's call for increased investment in heavy-lift launch vehicle technology, but we believe the United States should be on a clear path to accelerate the development and production of this critical system, along with a deep-space capsule. Both of these vehicles are essential to any deep-space exploration mission. We have the technology and the people to commence development of these vehicles now. A plan that includes a heavy-lift vehicle would enable space exploration supported by humans, large-array telescopes and deep-space robotic missions. It could achieve maximum benefit from American tax dollars by drawing on the cutting-edge technology already being developed for the Constellation program.

"Remaining at the forefront of human spaceflight is the only choice worthy of this great nation and to the long line of explorers and visionaries who brought us to where we are today."

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