

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-2404

April 4, 2019

Administrator Bridenstine  
NASA Headquarters  
300 E Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20546

Dear Administrator Bridenstine,

I am writing to express concern that NASA may bypass the Green Run test of the Space Launch System (SLS) to accelerate launch of Exploration Mission 1. In the NASA budget hearing, you acknowledged the importance of testing rocket engines. I'm proud to represent Stennis Space Center, which has a historic legacy of ensuring astronauts come home safely by flight certifying every NASA rocket since the Apollo era.

In late March, Vice President Pence addressed the National Space Council and announced ambitious plans for a 2024 lunar landing. Weeks before these statements, NASA announced the agency is anticipating more delays to Exploration Mission 1 because contractors failed to meet deadlines in manufacturing the most important component of SLS, the Core Stage.

The Core Stage and its four-engine propulsion system is certified for launch through Green Run testing. Test activities simulate launch day with an eight minute hot-fire of all four Core Stage engines. NASA spent six years and more than a hundred million dollars preparing the B-2 Test Stand for the Green Run. The funds invested in improving the test stand could have been spent more prudently had we known NASA was going to skip the Green Run. Other facilities at Stennis Space Center could have used this funding for needed improvements that are often overlooked by NASA Headquarters.

The poor performance of contractors may cause NASA to bypass a critical step that could jeopardize the future of this mission. NASA must act responsibly and ensure the next era of space exploration does not begin with catastrophic disaster.

Sincerely,



Steven Palazzo  
Member of Congress